

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS  
IN CONTEMPORARY CHRISTOLOGIES:  
EUROPEAN, LATIN AMERICAN AND ASIAN

BY  
DONG-KUN KIM

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# DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

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I certify that the following thesis is my original work and is the result of research carried out at the New College, University of Edinburgh from October 1989 to March 1992.

Dong-Kun Kim



To

My Father: My First Theological Teacher,  
Rev. Chi-Young Kim

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the significance of the historical Jesus in contemporary Christologies. Since the Enlightenment the quest of the 'historical Jesus' has influenced the shape of Christology not only in Europe but also in the Third World. We deal with the Christologies which have been formed in different backgrounds so that the roles of the historical Jesus in the Christologies of different cultures could be clear and comparable.

Chapter I concentrates on Bultmann's Christology; firstly it approaches the figure of the historical Jesus reconstructed by authentic sayings based on form criticism, secondly it seeks to grasp the exact meaning of the kerygma of the death and resurrection of Christ based on the demythologizing programme. It compares the content of the message of the historical Jesus and that of the post-Easter Church, and examines whether there is any real continuity between the two.

Chapter II is confined to examining how Käsemann, Fuchs and Ebeling have developed these issues which have been left unexplained in Bultmann; e.g. for Käsemann we look at how much and in what manner Paul and John were interested in the historical Jesus, and for Fuchs and Ebeling at the faith of Jesus and its meaning in the primitive Church. Focus is given solely to the relationship between the history of Jesus and the Christ of faith. In Chapter I and II, the guiding principle is to see whether there is a contact point between history and faith.

Chapter III deals with the Christologies of Boff and Sobrino in Latin America. Through the figure of the historical Jesus in their Christologies, the perspective of liberation Christology and the role of the historical Jesus in society are examined. It tries to understand how a radical image of Jesus in socio-political dimension can be compatible with traditional dogma. Therefore, the concern is primarily on the relationship between the present-historical liberation of Jesus and the future salvation of God.

Chapter IV deals with minjung Christology which has been formed in Asian culture. In Asia peoples have had their own messianic figures in historical and religious traditions, while Christianity there has had a relatively short history. Particular attention will be paid to the relationship between the Jesus-event and other messianic movements in traditional religions and in their history.

Chapter V examines different perspectives, Christological structures, and hermeneutics. In the pluralistic world, we attempt to understand the 'uniqueness' of the historical Jesus and the Christian faith in a new way. We attempt to encounter the uniqueness of Christian faith from the historical Jesus.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chapter I. The Role of the Historical Jesus in Bultmann's Christology	
1. Bultmann's View on the Sources	15
2. The Kerygma of the Cross and Resurrection	30
3. The Life and Demand of Jesus	55
4. Continuity Between the Message of Jesus and that of the Church	74
Chapter II. Continuity Between the Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ: Käsemann, Fuchs, Ebeling	
1. Introduction: Common Elements of Käsemann, Fuchs and Ebeling	85
2. The Uniqueness of Jesus and the Historical Jesus in Paul and John	92
3. The Faith of Jesus	107
4. Retrospect	130
Chapter III. Liberation and Salvation: The Image of Jesus in Latin America	
1. A New Perspective	134
2. The Life of Jesus	146
2.1. Jesus in His Mission: Boff	
2.2. The History of Jesus: Sobrino	
3. The Conflict and Death of Jesus	179
4. The Resurrection of Jesus and the Present Locus of Jesus.	184
5. Conclusion	192
Chapter IV. The Jesus Event and Historical Messianic Events: Jesus in Asian Culture	
1. The Role of Minjung and Christianity in Asian Culture	201
2. The Formation of Minjung Theology	235

3. Jesus in Minjung Theology	247
4. Conclusion	280

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Chapter V. Conclusion: The Spirit of Jesus in History

1. Different Perspectives--Different Structures and Different Hermeneutics	285
2. History and Faith	305
3. The Spirit of Jesus in History	334

Bibliography	338
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## Introduction

If theology seriously tries to offer meaning to contemporary Christians, this theology should not ignore the problems which contemporary Christians experience. We believe that there are at least three factors which cannot be ignored in a modern Christology; the problem of history, the impact of Marxism, and the new awareness of the value of world religions. The purpose of this thesis is to look at how these factors could affect the shape of Christology and how Christology could cope with them. This thesis will analysis the perspective, emphasis and structure of Christologies which have been formed in different cultures; more precisely, through the figure of the historical Jesus we will attempt to understand the influences of contemporary problems on Christology and the reaction of modern Christologies.

The rise of historical thought brought to an end the era of metaphysical thought which went back to classical antiquity, and with it, the attempt undertaken with the aid of this mode of thought to understand the event of the Christian revelation as something distinct and wholly other in its nature. The revolution in historical thinking took place a century or more after the scientific revolution was accomplished--in the age of the

Enlightenment. Historical consciousness included in its task even those events and testimonies which according to Christian faith contained the revelation of God to mankind within universal history, and submitted them to critical historical inquiry. It permitted no supra-nature and no supra-history, but drew everything into the broad stream of historical becoming and passing away. As a result, the basis of Christian faith and life has been challenged in the modern age. The authority of Jesus Christ and the Bible which hitherto prevailed seemed likely to be destroyed from within. In the eyes of history, Christian revelation is now no longer an absolute or eschatological event separate from the rest of history and determining all history, but is one historical phenomenon among many in the wider context of the general history of religion. Thus, whereas the middle ages were principally concerned with the question of the relationship between faith and reason, the modern ages were preoccupied with the question of the relationship between faith and history.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, historical thought has also influenced the shape of Christology; it appeared in the form of a distinction between the history of Jesus and the Christ of faith. It is generally agreed that the quest of the historical Jesus began with Samuel Reimarus, who

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<sup>1</sup>. Heinz Zahrnt, *The Question of God: Protestant Theology in the Twentieth Century* (London: Collins, 1969), pp. 207ff.

claimed to be distinguishing what Jesus really said and taught from the account of the apostolic writings. The first appearance of the phrase 'Jesus of history' is to be found in the context of the thorough-going critique of the Christian tradition in all its aspects launched at the Enlightenment. Behind it was a conviction that there were elements in the Church's picture of Jesus which, when examined critically, would prove to be late embellishments; their removal would reveal a figure different from the main lines of that picture. In the final decades of the nineteenth century, many writers believed not only that a 'scientific' life of Jesus could be written, but also that it could form the basis of Christian theology. In subsequent writings, 'Jesus of history' has become a convenient shorthand term for 'Jesus as he comes to be known by critical historical research'. Here we do not intend to summarize a history of 'the quest of the historical Jesus', but to point out that the distinction between the history of Jesus and the Christ of faith since the eighteenth century has been dominant in all modern study of the Gospels. Leaving aside the evaluation of the Life-of-Jesus movement in the nineteenth century, it has been argued that the 'movement' revealed several problems; firstly, it was discovered that the New Testament was not historically objective in its sources, but a highly interpretative set of documents which reflected the life-situations and beliefs of the primitive



Church; therefore the Gospels could not be biographical sources for the history of Jesus. Secondly, the nineteenth century conceived history in terms of an objective and dispassionate reconstruction of external facts. Since the historians in that period were governed by a positivistic approach to history, the question of the relation of the New Testament kerygma to historical reality could scarcely emerge as a pivotal concern. They hoped to reconstruct the 'real' Jesus by means of an objective historical method which would at the same time prove Jesus' religious superiority and his absoluteness.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, a critic can point out that the Life-of-Jesus movement in the nineteenth century did not positively contribute to Christian faith; it is true that the Life-of-Jesus movement showed the distinction between the history of Jesus and the Christ of faith, but it did not establish proper continuity between the two. Thus for a modern theologian to establish real continuity between history and faith appears as an important task. We will examine the Christology of Bultmann in Chapter I, and those of Käsemann, Fuchs and Ebeling in Chapter II. Our attention will be directed to the relationship between the

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<sup>2</sup>. Cf. John Bowden, "The Jesus of History" in *A Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), ed. Alan Richardson. pp. 176-182. Graham N. Stanton, "Historical Jesus" in *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London & Philadelphia: SCM & Trinity Press, 1990), eds. R.J. Coggins & J.L. Houlden. pp. 285-290.

historical Jesus and the Christ of the kerygma in particular, and therefore on a contact point between history and faith in general.

There have been great changes in the Eastern bloc countries including USSR before and after 1990; many countries, including Russia, are in the process of transition from socialist economics to the market economy of capitalism; there appears a new atmosphere of nationalism in the uneasy disturbances. The Soviet Union, the super power on the side of communism, has been dismantled in 1991, and several self-governing provinces declared their independence from main Russia. But no one can conclude simply that a set of changes in Eastern Europe means that the influence of Marxist philosophy has been ended. The recent 'change' may directly disappoint Moscow-oriented communism, but it is not yet clear how much it will affect Marxism (being in general agreement with Marx's own philosophy). A representative from Czechoslovakia said in his greeting to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1990 that; though the Eastern European countries are relatively poorer than those of the West, and though they have decided to accept the market economy, hopefully in cooperating with the West, the West should not forget that the Eastern European countries have struggled for 'equality'. My interpretation of the Czechoslovakian's address was that

the desire of human beings for a better society will not be faded out. As far as we cherish the wish and passion for an ideal society, the philosophy of Marx cannot be discarded easily. We have a historical example that the challenge of Marxism can recur any time even in the First World; in the mid-1960s the writings of the young Marx swept through the universities of Western Europe with their exciting criticism of institutions of manipulation and privilege, providing a new generation with a radical idealism which called for social justice, and an end to whatever dehumanized men and women in modern industrial society.<sup>3</sup> It is true that Marxism did not take an active role in the Western societies. However, the philosophy of Marx has had a great influence on the countries of the Third World, particularly on Latin America, where the contradictions of an early stage of monopolistic capitalism are clearly revealed; for example, in Latin America the problem of 'alienation' in a pre-industrial stage of development is related fundamentally to the oppression of the vast majority by institutions controlled by and for the interests of the ruling class, and Marx's general theory of alienation can be used as a useful tool to expose the ways in which religion has

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<sup>3</sup>. Alistair Kee, *Domination or Liberation : The Place of Religion in Social Conflict* (London: SCM, 1986), p. 59.

contributed to oppression.<sup>4</sup> According to Sobrino, in his contrast of European theology and Liberation Theology of Latin America, European theologians ground themselves in the thought of Kant who advocated the liberation of human reason from divine authority, while liberation theologians look to Marx as the liberator from the authority of social oppressors; the former seeks above all to understand reality through human reason, and the latter's primary concern is to transform reality through social action.<sup>5</sup> Whether the view of Sobrino is correct or not, it is true that liberation theology's philosophical affiliations have been more with Marxism than with transcendental Thomism, and its practical concern has been more for human society than for scientific interpretations of the natural world.<sup>6</sup>

Social circumstances of Latin America have forced theologians to address practical issues, and this in turn has led to social praxis. Theologians in Latin America could not ignore the fact that the great majority of Latin Americans are not only poor and oppressed but also Christians. So the great question at the beginning and still valid today is 'what role Christianity has to play

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<sup>4</sup>. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 65ff.

<sup>5</sup>. J. Sobrino, *The True Church and the Poor* (London: SCM, 1985), pp. 10ff.

<sup>6</sup>. John Macquarrie, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought* (London & Philadelphia: SCM & Trinity Press, 1990), p. 316.

in its social situation'.<sup>7</sup> Therefore liberation theology begins with facing the lives of the poor and oppressed as historical reality, and then it interprets the Bible to enhance the lives of these. Accordingly the figure of Jesus is primarily viewed in relation to the present need of socio-political praxis. Nevertheless, as it will be noted, liberation Christology, on the whole, is quite orthodox and traditional. In Chapter III, therefore, our concern will be on examining i) how the motive of social praxis can be connected to the historical Jesus, and ii) how the figure of Jesus as liberator can be understood together with the traditional conception of salvation, i.e. the continuity between liberation of the historical Jesus in the present and the salvation of God in the future.

We can characterize the present situation of world religions in two features. One is that no one particular religion can dominate others, and the other is that there are active dialogues between religions. The horror of the Second World War following the equal horror of the First World War damaged the credibility of the Christian European civilizations which had fought them. For two thousand years, the middle East, India, China and Europe based upon great religious traditions, were equal,

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<sup>7</sup>. L.Boff and C.Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Kent: Burns & Oates, 1987), pp. 6-7.

parallel and separate; in the early modern period, up to 1945, the West and Christian tradition were dominant. However today no one block of the world, and no one religious tradition, is dominant in the sense that the West and Christianity were dominant up to 1945.<sup>8</sup> Frank Whaling classifies the present-day religious traditions into eight blocks which have had different and unique religious backgrounds.<sup>9</sup> However, since World War Two there has been greater interaction between religious traditions. One facet of this is the rise of the ecumenical movement within different traditions, for instance, such as the World Council of Churches since 1948, the Second Vatican Council of 1963-65, the Conference on World Evangelization in 1974, etc. Religious inter-connections are not confined to increased contacts 'within' religious traditions. Recently a wider ecumenism 'between' religious traditions has become more obvious; there has been increased contact at international level between world representatives of religious traditions through the medium of the Temple of Understanding, the United Nations and other forums. Of necessity such meetings tend to be formal but they are symbolic of a growing feeling towards a wider ecumenism.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>. Frank Whaling, "Religion in Today's World: An Introductory Survey" in *Religion in Today's World* (Edinburgh : T & T Clark, 1987), ed. Frank Whaling, pp. 17, 31f.

<sup>9</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 29ff.

<sup>10</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

Whaling says, "We live in a global world--real separation between blocks and religious traditions is no longer a viable possibility--but within that global world sharing and dialogue on a basis of authentic mutuality are more possible than ever before".<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, there has been a radical change within the Christian world. In 1900 Europe, including Russia, and North America together accounted for 83 percent of the world Christians. The continent of Africa accounted for less than 2 percent. Today over half of the Christians in the world live in the southern continents of Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania.<sup>12</sup> So Whaling could say, "The Christian balance has now shifted from the West so that a future Pope and a future headquarters of the World Council of Churches could conceivably come from the Third World".<sup>13</sup> While more and more Christians in Europe and North America are experiencing 'religious pluralism' in a new way; they are feeling not only the reality of so many other religious paths, but also their vitality, their influence in our modern world, and their depth and attractiveness.<sup>14</sup> It seems that since Vatican

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<sup>11</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>12</sup>. Andrew Walls, "The Christian Tradition in Today's World" in *Religion in Today's World*, p. 80.

<sup>13</sup>. Frank Whaling, *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>14</sup>. Paul F.Knitter, in "Preface" in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness* (London: SCM, 1988), eds. John Hick & Paul F.Knitter.



Two the strict Christian 'exclusivism', which can be best expressed as *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, has largely faded out from the mainline Churches. John Hick calls this change of Christian attitude 'inclusivism'; those who do not have an explicit Christian faith but who nevertheless seek, consciously or unconsciously, to do God's will can be regarded as 'honorary Christians', even though they may insist that they are not Christians but Muslims, Hindus, Buddhist, or whatever. But Hick is not content with the new attitude of the Church. He claims that 'inclusivism' should become 'pluralism'. For Hick 'pluralism' is the view that the transformation of human existence from self-centredness to salvation is taking place in different ways within the contexts of all the great religious traditions: therefore, there is a plurality of divine revelations, making possible a plurality of forms of saving human response.<sup>15</sup> In this way the issue of 'pluralism' is directly related to the doctrine of the Trinity, particularly to Christology, and therefore to the *uniqueness* of Christian faith; for in its orthodox form the incarnational doctrine claims that Jesus was God incarnate, the Second Person of the Triune God living a human life. It is integral to this faith that there has been and will be no other divine incarnation. Human beings can be delivered through faith 'only' in

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<sup>15</sup>. John Hick, *Problem of Religious Pluralism* (London: Macmillan Press, 1985), pp. 31-34.



Jesus Christ, who makes Christianity unique. Then, in the pluralistic world, should Christians give up the 'uniqueness' of Christian faith? If Christians accept 'religious pluralism' as suggested by Hick, it may mean that they have to admit that there are other saviours along with Jesus Christ. In Chapter IV, we will examine minjung Christology of Asia. Minjung Christology has been formed i) in Asian culture in which there have been other messianic figures in their religious traditions, ii) but at the same time from a Christian point of view. Therefore our attention will be paid to the relationship between Jesus and other messianic figures in other religious and historical traditions.

As has been noted , in the main body of this thesis, our focus will be given to i) the relationship between the history of Jesus and the Christ of faith, ii) the relationship between the present historical liberation of Jesus and the total salvation of God in the future, and iii) the relationship between the Jesus-event and other messianic movements. Finally we will want to draw out the common elements in the Christologies of Bultmann, post Bultmannians, liberation theology and minjung theology; that the historical Jesus takes a central place in their Christologies, while recognizing that their Christological structures will be different from each other according to their different perspectives. It should be noted that the

crucial concern in their Christologies is to encounter 'what the historical Jesus means for *modern man*'. Therefore each develops his own hermeneutics to bridge the gap between the historical Jesus and us. In Chapter V, we will compare and contrast different perspectives, Christological structures and hermeneutics. In doing this, we will attempt to understand the 'uniqueness' of Christian faith in a new way. We believe that the Christian faith is 'unique'. However the uniqueness will not be argued in its presuppositions (dogma), but in its result (act of believing); when we encounter the historical Jesus, and when we practice the life-giving spirit of Jesus, the Christian faith can be proved 'unique'.

## CHAPTER I. The Role of the Historical Jesus in Bultmann's Christology

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the role of the historical Jesus in Bultmann's Christology. In section one, our focus will be on Bultmann's view of the source material, since it was decisive in his theological development concerning the historical Jesus and the Christ of the kerygma; in this section we will concentrate on examining how much Bultmann can suggest the authentic sayings of Jesus, which can be sources for constructing the historical Jesus. In section two, we will deal with demythologizing programme with special reference to the kerygma of the cross and the resurrection of Christ. We will try to understand why this demythologizing programme has arisen, how it has been developed, and discern the main points concerning the Christ of the kerygma. In section three, we will examine Bultmann's understanding of the historical Jesus, who is constructed 'solely' from the sayings and acts which have been proved as authentic in section one. In section four, we will compare the content of the message of the historical Jesus with that of the post-Easter Church, and examine whether there are any real continuities between the two.

## 1. Bultmann's View on the Sources

Form criticism in Bultmann has two presuppositions: 1) Between the time of Jesus' ministry and the writing of the Gospels there was a period when the sayings of Jesus and stories about him were communicated orally among the followers of Jesus. During this oral period the original tradition about Jesus was made up almost entirely of brief single units. Therefore, form criticism attempts to discover the origin and the history of the particular units and thereby to throw some light on the history of the tradition before it took literary form.<sup>1</sup> ii) In the oral stage these units of tradition assumed particular 'forms' according to the function which they performed in Christian community. The significance of form criticism, Bultmann says, does not consist of identifying the individual units of the tradition according to their aesthetic or other characteristics and placing them in their various categories. Rather the proper understanding of form criticism rests upon the judgement that the literature in which the life of a given community has taken shape, springs out of quite definite conditions and

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<sup>1</sup>. R. Bultmann, "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels", in *Form Criticism* (Willet, Clark & Company: Chicago & New York, 1934), pp. 25ff. R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1972), 2nd ed. p. 4.

wants of life from which grows up a quite definite style and quite specific forms and categories, i.e. every literary category has its 'life situation' (*Sitz im Leben*). Thus, form criticism looks for the life-situation which is not an individual historical event but a typical situation or occupation in the life of community.<sup>2</sup> We can say that form criticism of the New Testament, in general, has two aims--to classify the various New Testament books according to their literary genre, and to analyze the smaller units of traditional material according to the 'forms' which they have assumed during preliterate period.<sup>3</sup> For Bultmann, however, the concern of his form critical inquiry in *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* falls to the latter.

Bultmann's view on the sources is well expressed in *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*. The main body of *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* is divided largely into two parts, the 'sayings of Jesus' and the 'narrative material'. From them we will pay attention to the first part. The sayings of Jesus are classified, according to their forms, into the 'apophthegms' and the 'dominical sayings' including the 'I-sayings' and the 'legend'.

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<sup>2</sup>. R. Bultmann, *The History of Synoptic Tradition*, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>. Cf. Stephen H. Travis, "Form Criticism", in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1985), 2nd ed. ed. I. Howard Marshall, pp. 153ff.

Bultmann deals with the apophthegms according to three categories; 'conflict', 'didactic' and 'biographical apophthegms'. In analyzing the forms, conflict and didactic apophthegms are dealt with together. In tracing the form and history of the apophthegms, Bultmann categorises them into 'controversy' and 'scholastic dialogues'. The ruling criterion of the controversy dialogues is that they have some action or attitude as their starting point, while for the scholastic dialogues it is not necessary to have some particular action as the starting point.

Bultmann's general judgement of the typical character of the controversy and scholastic dialogues are as follows: All of the controversy dialogues have 'imaginary scenes'. 'Imaginary scenes' means the symbolic presentation added by the early communities to, possibly original, a saying or action of Jesus in the light of the interests of communities.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, for Bultmann the imaginary scenes, reflecting the situation of the life of communities, in the controversy dialogues are not historical reports. But this does not mean that the controversy dialogues do not contain authentic sayings and actions of Jesus. Here attention is needed to understand the nature of form criticism. Bultmann states;

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<sup>4</sup>. R.Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Traditions*, pp. 39f.

Controversy dialogues are all of them imaginary scenes. Therefore, however, we must keep away at first from the question whether Jesus sometimes healed on the Sabbath day, or whether he used a certain expression which we find in a Controversy Dialogue in a discussion with his opponents. Of course, it is quite possible that he did; indeed, very probable: but the first question to be asked, methodologically speaking, must be about the literary form of the controversy dialogue, and its origin as a literary device. This is simply the question about the *Sitz im Leben*, which is not concerned with the origin of a particular report of a particular historical happening, but with the origin and affinity of a certain literary form in and with typical situations and attitudes of a community.<sup>5</sup>

As above quotation shows, Bultmann is convinced that a saying can only be understood by us in terms of its literary kind. Bultmann argues that it is methodologically false to start from some hypothetical 'original dialogue' and afterwards to ask the question, 'In what historical life do the stories of controversy (or scholastic, biographical, and so on ) dialogues have their proper place?' Bultmann asserts that this question should be put first.<sup>6</sup> According to Bultmann, the motive of the

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<sup>5</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>6</sup>. Cf. *Ibid.* Therefore, Bultmann always attempts to identify a motive of a saying or story according to its form in comparing with that of early Jewish, the Old Testament and Hellenistic literature. If a saying reflects an interest of the early Church, whether the primitive Palestinian or Hellenistic, or its form is parallel to Jewish or Hellenistic literature, the historicity of this saying can be doubted. Bultmann's primary concern in *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* is not to collect the authentic words of Jesus, but to examine the motive and origin of a word in its life-situation by which we can understand the history of

controversy dialogues are in the apologetic and polemic of the Palestinian Church, and the life situation lies in i) the Church's discussion with its opponents, and ii) in debating within the Church on questions of law.<sup>7</sup> For the scholastic dialogues the life-situation is very similar with that of the controversy dialogues. The difference between them is that i) for the scholastic dialogues, instead of having the starting point, for the most part the master is simply questioned by some one seeking knowledge, and ii) the scholastic dialogues do not necessarily have imaginary character.<sup>8</sup> However, Bultmann does not doubt that the primary element in the controversy and scholastic dialogues is the dominical saying,<sup>9</sup> and that both the controversy and scholastic dialogues were formulated in early stages by the Palestinian Church.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the formal construction of biographical apophthegms is more varied than others. In general, Jesus' sayings, which is the point of the apophthegms, comes at the end. Bultmann thinks that the origin of

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tradition. This is one of reasons why this book gives more negative impression concerning the historicity of the words of Jesus.

<sup>7</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 39ff.

<sup>8</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 54f.

<sup>9</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 54f.

<sup>10</sup>. There are only some exceptions which were formulated by Hellenistic influences: Lk. 6:5, Mk. 7:20-23, Lk. 17:20f. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 55.



biographical apophthegms lies in Rabbinic stories, and that their motive originates from the preaching of early Christianity.<sup>11</sup>

Analysis has shown that *apophthegms* developed from a tradition in which independent sayings were joined to already existing situations, whether these situations were unitarily conceived or compounded of elements. Bultmann concludes from apophthegms; "In the face of the entire content of the tradition it can hardly be doubted that Jesus did teach as a Rabbi, gather disciples and engage in disputations. The individual controversy dialogues may not be historical reports of particular incidents in the life of Jesus, but the general character of his life is rightly portrayed in them, on the basis of historical recollection".<sup>12</sup> Bultmann suggests quite a few apophthegms which can be traced back to Jesus himself.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 55ff.

<sup>12</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>13</sup>. For the controversy dialogues, most of the conflict and didactic apophthegms, and for scholastic dialogues; the Healing of the paralytic (Mk. 2:1-12 par), Plucking Corn on the Sabbath (Mk. 2:23-28), The Rich Young Man (Mk. 10:17-22), The Coming of the Kingdom of God (Lk. 17:20-21), The Cursed Fig Tree (Mk. 11:20-25 par), The Census (Mk. 12:13-17 par). *Ibid.*, pp. 14-26. Cf. p. 385. Out of eighteen biographical apophthegms the followings are not considered 'ideal' or containing genuine sayings of Jesus; Following Jesus (Lk. 13:31-33), Jesus Blesses the Children (Mk. 10:13-16 par), Jesus and Herod (Lk. 13:31-33), The Foretelling of the Destruction of the Temple (Mk. 13:1-2 par), The Anointing in Bethany (Mk. 14:3-9 par), and The Escort to the Cross (Lk. 23:27-31). *Ibid.*, pp. 27-39, 56.

The dominical sayings are divided into i) the logia or wisdom sayings, ii) the prophetic and apocalyptic sayings and iii) the legal sayings. The 'I-sayings' and the 'similitudes' are also examined under the heading of the dominical sayings. For the logia Bultmann has particular difficulty in distinguishing the original sayings of Jesus from those of the Church, because the forms of the logia are completely parallel either to popular proverbs or to traditional Jewish wisdom sayings. In fact, "the proverbial literature of all peoples exhibit more or less the same forms".<sup>14</sup> Therefore if Bultmann excludes those sayings which are parallel either to popular proverbs or to Jewish wisdom literature from the authentic sayings of Jesus, there is a danger that some of those authentic sayings may be eliminated on the ground of 'form'. The reason is that though the forms of the sayings of Jesus in the logia are the same as those of secular proverbs or Jewish wisdom sayings, it is still possible that; i) "Jesus could have taken a saying already in circulation, and himself enriched it".<sup>15</sup> ii) "He could certainly sometimes have coined a secular proverb himself".<sup>16</sup> iii) The Church and tradition could have fitted genuine sayings

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<sup>14</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>15</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>16</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 101 ff.

of Jesus into the forms of secular proverbs or Jewish wisdom literature.<sup>17</sup> Bultmann confesses that "I have in the first place postponed any question as to the *genuiness of the logia*.... When we pass from general considerations to examine the logia concretely, it is frequently impossible to do more than pass a subjective judgement".<sup>18</sup> Bultmann is well aware of the above three possibilities, but he takes "a critically assured minimum". For the logia Bultmann does not judge genuine sayings of Jesus by their form. He regards them as authentic words of Jesus which "contain something characteristic, new, reaching out beyond popular wisdom and piety and yet are in no sense scribal or rabbinic nor yet Jewish apocalyptic".<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless the sayings which are secured as authentic by Bultmann are by no means few.<sup>20</sup>

The forms of the prophetic and apocalyptic sayings of Jesus show that they are generally parallel with Jewish material. However, their meanings tend to be different

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<sup>17</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 88. Cf. pp. 101 ff.

<sup>18</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>19</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>20</sup>. Matt. 5:39b-41 (Revenge), 5:44-48 (Loving Enemies), 7:13f (The Narrow Gate), 22:14 (The Many called and the Few Chosen), Mk. 3:24-26 (Kingdom divided against itself), 3:27 (Satan is already overcome), 7:15 (Purity), 8:35 (Losing life and Finding it), 10:15 (Children), 10:23b, 25 (The Rich and the Kingdom of God), 10:31 (The First and the Last), Lk. 9:60a, 9:62 (The Hand on the Plough), 14:11 and 16:15 (Exultation and Humility). *Ibid.*, pp. 105, 397.

from those of Jewish prophetic and apocalyptic sayings, since the points of emphasis have been changed. The sayings of Jesus have two distinguishing points; i) the present element of salvation, ii) the importance of decision. Firstly, the sayings of Jesus "are not thought of just as general prophecies of future salvation, but as referring to the present. The longed-for age is breaking in now".<sup>21</sup> The hearers of Jesus could experience salvation in their own place and time. The messianic age had dawned in the message of Jesus. "The hearers are not congratulated just on their seeing and hearing, but because of what they see and hear, i.e. what they experience. And that can be none other than the Messianic age".<sup>22</sup> Jesus' exorcism of demons clearly shows that the New Age is already breaking in. "The saying [Mk. 3:27] could originally have meant that victory of Jesus over demon had demonstrated that God had already overthrown the devil's reign".<sup>23</sup> Bultmann cites some sayings of Jesus which indicate the present character of salvation.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 126

<sup>22</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 109

<sup>23</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>24</sup>. Blessedness of the Eye-Witness (Lk. 10:23 of), The Hundred Fold Reward (Mk. 10:29-30 par), The Beatitude (Matt. 11:5f). *Ibid.*, pp. 109-130. Concerning the Kingdom Sayings: Mk. 3:127, Matt. 12:28 /Lk. 11:20. *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 98. In the 1962 supplement of *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, the "present" character of salvation is argued by quoting Kümmel, Dodd, and Jeremias who believe in the presence of the Kingdom of God in the ministry of Jesus based on Mk. 3:27, Lk. 10:23f/ Matt.

Secondly, even though the forms of Jesus' sayings are parallel to Jewish prophetic literature, Jesus' sayings contain the critical character of the "hour of decision". Here the important point is whether the sayings are to be understood with references to Jesus' *person* or to Jesus' *preaching*. As far as the forms are concerned, there are three groups of sayings stressing the seriousness of the hour of decision; i) references to the preaching of Jesus,<sup>25</sup> ii) references either to the preaching or to the person of Jesus<sup>26</sup> and iii) references to the person of Jesus.<sup>27</sup> Bultmann's analyses have shown that those sayings which have reference to the preaching of Jesus were formulated at an early time, and that those sayings which have reference to the person of Jesus were formed generally at a later time. This demonstrates that the weight shifted gradually from the preaching to the person of Jesus, i.e. the person of Jesus became integral to the

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12:16 and the Refusal of Sign (Lk. 12:20f). *Ibid.*, pp. 396, 398, 402.

<sup>25</sup>. The Hundred Fold Reward (Mk. 10:29-30 par), The Gentiles and the Kingdom (Matt. 8:11-12), Woes to the Rich (Lk. 6:24-26), Warning of the Parousia (Matt. 24:37-41), The Signs of the Times (Lk. 12:54-56), etc. *Ibid.*, pp. 112-116.

<sup>26</sup>. Confessing the Saying of Jesus (Matt. 10:32f), Those who say 'Lord, Lord' (Lk. 6:46), etc. *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 116.

<sup>27</sup>. The Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13), The Sudden Coming of the Son of Man (Lk. 17:23-24), The Theme of Jesus' Preaching (Mk. 1:15 par), etc. *Ibid.*, pp. 118 ff.

Gospel.<sup>28</sup> We can point out two interesting things here; First, according to the first stage one could make a correct decision and experience salvation in the *preaching* of Jesus. Second, regardless of whether the sayings have reference to the preaching or to the person of Jesus, the significance can be identical. When we see the second stage this becomes clear. Based on Matt. 10:32f /Lk. 12:8f, Mk. 8:38 par, Bultmann argues that "it is hardly possible to decide whether the original subject was the person of Jesus or his saying; in any event the significance would be the same".<sup>29</sup> Therefore, we could argue that in Bultmann the problem of the 'proclaimer' and the 'proclaimed' is neither serious nor unbridgeable. There is a formal distinction between the historical Jesus and the Christ of the kerygma. But their function and content can be the same. We will discuss this later in section four.

The 'legal sayings' are usually formulated in legalistic style, i.e. they are sentences whose first clause contains a condition and whose second clause is an imperative or an assertion. According to Bultmann, it is not easy to draw the original meaning from the legal sayings, since "the tradition gathered dominical sayings, gave them a new form, enlarged them by additions and

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<sup>28</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>29</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

developed them further".<sup>30</sup> However, when we consider his analysis of the forms of the legal sayings, it is highly probable that the Church preserved "a stock of dominical sayings".<sup>31</sup>

The development of 'I-Sayings' was predominantly the work of the Hellenistic church, though a beginning had already been made in the Palestinian Church. Bultmann traces the motives of those I-Sayings whose origins lie in the Palestinian Church: the legal debate (Matt. 12:27), the gentile mission (Matt. 16:24), the mission of the early Church (Matt. 10:16a), the conflict with the Jews (Matt. 12:27), the bitter experience of the primitive Church (Matt. 10:34-36), etc. Bultmann believes that there are a few genuine I-Sayings, particularly among sayings about the Son of Man, sayings revealing Jesus' prophetic self-consciousness and sayings in which Jesus speaks of his coming.<sup>32</sup>

Bultmann suggests three criteria of authenticity for the 'similitudes'. He says that we can regard a

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<sup>30</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>31</sup>. These sayings in particular can contain original meanings; Matt. 23:16-17, Matt. 16:18-19, Kindness to Children (Mk. 9:37 par), Murder (Matt. 5:21f), Adultery (Matt. 5:27f), False Witness (Matt. 5:33-37), Lk. 22:27, Mk. 7:15, Mk. 3:4, etc. *Ibid.*, pp. 130-150.

<sup>32</sup>. For the 'Son of Man' sayings: Mk. 8:38, Lk. 12:8f, Lk. 17:23f par, Matt. 24:37-39 par. *Ibid.*, pp. 150ff. For Jesus' prophetic self consciousness: Matt. 11:5 par, Mk. 8:38, Lk. 12:8f, Lk. 6:46 par. *Ibid.*, p. 151. Cf. pp. 128, 153. For those in which Jesus speaks of his coming: Mk. 2:17, Lk. 17:10, Lk. 12:49-50, etc. *Ibid.*, pp. 152ff.



similitude of Jesus as 'genuine' i) if its content is opposed to Jewish morality and piety, ii) if it reflects the distinctive eschatological temper which characterized the preaching of Jesus, and iii) if it has no specific Christian feature.<sup>33</sup> Bultmann acknowledges that there is more possibility of finding authentic sayings of Jesus in the similitudes than in the apophthegms and other dominical sayings.<sup>34</sup>

We can understand then that Bultmann's view on the Synoptics as sources for the *life* and *personality* of Jesus is quite negative. Of course, Bultmann does not deny that the Synoptic Gospels provide basic sources for life of the historical Jesus: "Although the Synoptic Gospels do not suffice as sources for a reconstruction of the life of Jesus, and although they are not sufficient to give a portrait in the real sense, since they say nothing of Jesus' inner development, nevertheless they do indicate something of Jesus' activity from which a few of his

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<sup>33</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>34</sup>. These parables have a high possibility of containing original sayings of Jesus; The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin (Lk. 14:4-10 par), The Signs of the Times (Lk. 12:54-56), Children at Play (Lk. 7:31-35 par), The Leaven (Matt. 13:33 par), The Pearl of Great Price (Matt. 13:45-46), The House Builders (Matt. 7:24-27 par), The Fig Tree (Mk. 13:28-29), The Two Sons (Matt. 21:28-31), etc. *Ibid.*, pp. 166ff, 421.



personal characteristics may be inferred".<sup>35</sup> However, as far as the *content* of the message of the historical Jesus is concerned, Bultmann does not doubt that the sayings and acts of Jesus in the Synoptics can be source material. Bultmann is convinced that his form criticism is not hinderance, but a good tool to understand the content of the message of Jesus:

It cannot be denied that even here many uncertainties remain, and that the historical work still to be done at this point is neither complete, nor can ever arrive at absolutely certain results; but if the work is done in accordance with clear methods, it cannot result in complete scepticism. On one point one must rest content: the *character* of Jesus, the vivid picture of his personality and his life, cannot now be clearly made out; but, what is more important, the content of his message is or will be ever more clearly recognizable. Though one may admit the fact that for no single word of Jesus is it possible to produce positive evidence of its authenticity, still one may point to a whole series of words found in the oldest stratum of tradition which do give us a consistent representation of the historical message of Jesus.<sup>36</sup>

Therefore, we cannot agree with some critics who argue that the figure of Jesus in Bultmann is contentless.<sup>37</sup> We

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<sup>35</sup>. R.Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus", in *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ*, C.E.Braaten and R.A.Harrisville, eds. p. 22.

<sup>36</sup>. R.Bultmann, "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels", pp. 60-61.

<sup>37</sup>. Cf. Van Austin Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer: The Morality of Historical Knowledge and Christian Belief* (London: SCM, 1967), pp. 143f. Hugh Anderson, *Jesus and Christian Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 36f.

will look at Bultmann's interpretation of Jesus' message  
in section three.

## 2. The Kerygma of the Cross and Resurrection

According to Bultmann, the world-view of the New Testament is essentially mythological, i.e. the concept of the world as being structured in three stories, heaven, earth and hell.<sup>38</sup> "This then is the mythical view of the world which the New Testament presupposes when it presents the event of redemption which is the subject of its preaching".<sup>39</sup> The mythological thought of the New Testament is not unique, rather all religions of the Hellenistic era--star worship, mystery religion, gnosticism and Jewish apocalyptic myths--share a common world view. The origin of the various mythological themes in the New Testament can be easily traced in the contemporary mythology of Jewish Apocalyptic and in the redemption myths of gnosticism.<sup>40</sup> The mythical world-view of the New Testament has nothing particular: "It is simply the cosmology of a pre-scientific age".<sup>41</sup> Bultmann defines

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<sup>38</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 15.

<sup>39</sup>. R.Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology", in *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. H.W.Bartsch, (London: SPCK, 1957), vol.I, p. 2. Italics deleted.

<sup>40</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 15. R.Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in Its Contemporary Setting* (London, New York: Thames and Hudson, 1956), pp. 146-174.

<sup>41</sup>. R.Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology", p. 3.

the word myth as follows<sup>42</sup> : i) Myth gives worldly objectivity to that which is unworldly. It objectifies a transcendental reality as a this worldly thing which is tangible and visible. Therefore, 'mythological thinking' is that which *objectifies* and thus speaks in objective statement about a reality that is not an 'object'. ii) Myth is an expression of man's awareness that he is not the lord of his own being. It is the belief that the origin and the purpose of the world are to be sought not within this world but beyond it. iii) The purpose of myth is to express man's understanding of himself in the world in which he lives. Therefore, myth should be interpreted not cosmologically, but anthropologically, or better

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<sup>42</sup>. Bultmann does not provide a systematic treatment of 'myth'. Therefore there has been no agreement for a formal definition of myth amongst the interpreters of Bultmann. Several critics have charged that Bultmann's concept of myth is ambiguous. Cf. Ian Henderson, *Myth in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1952), p. 46. John Macquarrie, *An Existentialist Theology* (London: SCM, 1955), pp. 166ff. Ronald W. Hepburn "Demythologizing and the Problem of Validity", in *Essays on Philosophical Theology* (London: SCM, 1956), eds. Anthony Flew & Alasdair MacIntyre, pp. 22ff. However, we believe that the correct understanding of the basic conceptions of myth as defined by Bultmann is sufficient for our argument. So, we will leave this issue open. For useful discussion concerning the definition of myth in Bultmann, see Schubert M. Ogden, *Christ Without Myth* (London: Collins, 1962), pp. 26ff. John Painter, *Theology as Hermeneutics: Rudolf Bultmann's Interpretation of the History of Jesus* (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1987), pp. 131ff.

still, existentially.<sup>43</sup>

Bultmann argues that the world view of the Scripture is unacceptable to modern man whose thinking has been shaped by science. Modern man no longer thinks of direct intervention by transcendent powers. Bultmann gives us an example; "let us think simply of the newspapers. Have you read anywhere in them that political or social or economic events are performed by supernatural powers such as God, angels or demons?"<sup>44</sup> The important point is not concrete results of scientific research but the method of thinking from which this modern world view follows. This means that today the world is understood as a closed continuum of cause and effect, and the history is also understood in terms of the causal nexus. Bultmann states: "We are not only theoretically convinced that all happenings in the world take place according to certain norms, according to unalterable laws, but in practice too, in our work and affairs, we behave on the assumption that everything that happens has its natural cause and natural effect".<sup>45</sup> Therefore, to preach the New Testament with mythology and to press its acceptance as an article of faith would

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<sup>43</sup>. R.Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology", pp. 10-11. R.Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, pp. 18-21. R.Bultmann, "The Case for Demythologizing" in *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. Hans-Werner Bartsch, (London: SPCK, 1962), vol. II, p. 185, Footnote,1.

<sup>44</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 37.

<sup>45</sup>. R.Bultmann, *This World and the Beyond* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1960), pp. 155-156.

entail "a sacrifice of the intellect which could have only one result--a curious form of schizophrenia and insincerity".<sup>46</sup> As far as the world-view of the Bible is concerned, Bultmann believes that it cannot be renewed. He argues that the mythical view of the world must be accepted or rejected in its entirety.<sup>47</sup> "It is, of course, true that de-mythologizing takes the modern world-view as a criterion".<sup>48</sup>

However it does not mean that the purpose of demythologizing is to change the mythical world-view to a scientific world-view, or to reasonable statements for modern man. Bultmann says that "this is most certainly not my intention. The purpose of demythologizing is not to make religion more acceptable to modern man by trimming the traditional Biblical texts".<sup>49</sup> In fact modern man is in danger of two things: i) He strives for gaining mastery over the world and over his own life by scientific knowledge. He thinks that he can use the powers of nature according to his plans and desires. ii) He supposes that real security can be gained by men organizing their own personal and community life.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, Bultmann argues

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<sup>46</sup>. R.Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology", p. 4.

<sup>47</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>48</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 35.

<sup>49</sup>. R.Bultmann, "The Case for Demythologising", pp. 182-183.

<sup>50</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, pp. 39-

that the purpose of demythologizing is to eliminate a false stumbling-block, the mythical world-view of the New Testament, and to bring into sharp focus on the real stumbling-block to modern man.<sup>51</sup> The real stumbling-block is the word of God, which calls man away from his selfishness and from the illusory security which he has built up for himself. At the same time the word of God calls man to his true self.<sup>52</sup> Next, Bultmann argues that demythologizing is legitimate, since the process of demythologizing began in the New Testament--partly with Paul, and radically with John. Paul realized that the decisive event had already happened with the resurrection of Christ, though he still expected the end of the world as a cosmic drama and the parousia of Christ on the clouds of heaven. John believed that the resurrection of Jesus, pentecost and the parousia of Jesus were one and the same event, and that believers have already eternal life.<sup>53</sup> Bultmann argues that "demythologizing has its beginning in the New Testament itself, and therefore our task of demythologizing today is justified".<sup>54</sup> Bultmann thinks

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40. "The Case for Demythologizing", pp. 182f.

<sup>51</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 36. "A Reply to the Theses of J.Schniewind" in *Kerygma and Myth*, vol.I, p. 119. "The Case for Demythologizing", pp. 182f.

<sup>52</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, pp. 39f.

<sup>53</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>54</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

that his demythologizing programme is "in fact a perfect parallel to St. Paul's and Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone apart from the works of the law".<sup>55</sup> Finally, Bultmann explains his basic principle of demythologizing, i.e. 'demythologizing' is not to eliminate the mythology of the New Testament, but to interpret it. According to Bultmann, the liberal theologians of the nineteenth century were familiar with the mythological elements in the New Testament. The old liberal theologians thought that they could safely eliminate the mythology of the New Testament and retain only the core of it. But they threw away not only the mythology but also the kerygma itself, or they reduced the kerygma to a few basic principles of religion and ethics.<sup>56</sup> Bultmann says that "whereas the older liberals used criticism to *eliminate* the mythology of the New Testament, our task today is to use criticism to *interpret* it".<sup>57</sup> Bultmann concludes that because the mythology of the New Testament contains man's self-understanding, and because the meaning of mythology lies not in its imagery with its apparent objectivity but in the understanding of human existence which it is trying to express, the only way to interpret the mythology of the New Testament is 'to

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<sup>55</sup>. R.Bultmann, "Bultmann Replies to His Critics" in *Kerygma and Myth*, vol.I, p. 211.

<sup>56</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-15.

<sup>57</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 12.



interpret it existentially'.<sup>58</sup>

Bultmann's existential interpretation rests upon his view of hermeneutics. Bultmann says that "*demythologizing is a hermeneutic method*, that is, a method of interpretation, of exegesis. 'Hermeneutics' means the art of exegesis".<sup>59</sup> Bultmann takes two presuppositions for his hermeneutics-- 'pre-understanding' and 'life-relationship'. First, Bultmann differentiates in principle presuppositions in respect of method from presuppositions in respect of results. Method is nothing other than a kind of questioning, a way of putting questions. This means that we cannot understand a given text without asking certain questions of it.<sup>60</sup> In other words, every interpretation is directed by a particular set of questions, an 'objective'; it is always accompanied by a pre-understanding of the matter, which forms the basis of the enquiry into the text. Bultmann explains: "It is evident that each interpretation is guided by a certain interest, by a certain *way of putting questions*: ... it is evident that the questioning arises from a particular interest in the matter referred to, and therefore that a particular understanding of the matter is

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<sup>58</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>59</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>60</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

presupposed. I like to call this a pre-understanding".<sup>61</sup> Therefore, a particular set of questions is always accompanied by a pre-understanding of the matter. "The formulation of a question, and an interpretation, is possible at all only on the basis of such a prior understanding".<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, 'putting question' (pre-understanding) arises because of the structure of man's being and consciousness in relation to himself and the world. It is of the nature of the human being (*Dasein*) to question. In this sense, preunderstanding belongs to our life, and man's life in the world provides the possibility of understanding texts which are the expression of life moments. Therefore, if we approach the possibilities of human existence which are expressed in a text, we are asked to hear what the text claims: "...it is valid in the investigation of the text to allow oneself to be examined by the text, and to hear the claim it makes".<sup>63</sup> Further, when a text reveals a possibility of human existence, the decision of the exegete is demanded. Bultmann believes that authentic understanding can take place only in decision: "because in the text the exegete encounters a claim, i.e. is there offered a self-

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<sup>61</sup>. R.Bultmann, *History and Eschatology* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1975), p. 113.

<sup>62</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Essays Philosophical and Theological* (London: SCM, 1955), p. 239.

<sup>63</sup>. *Ibid.*

understanding that he can accept... or reject, and therefore is faced with the demand for decision".<sup>64</sup>

Second, the possibility of understanding is given only when the author and the interpreter have a life-relationship to the matter which is in question. It signifies that understanding of a certain matter comes through "the interpreter's relationship in his life to the subject which is directly or indirectly expressed in the text".<sup>65</sup> If there is no life-relationship, the texts are mute. Therefore, all exegesis is determined by the fact that "expositor and author live as men in the same historical world, in which 'human being' occurs as a 'being' in an environment, in understanding intercourse with objects and our fellow-men".<sup>66</sup> Bultmann concludes that "without such a relation and such previous understanding (Vorverständnis) it is impossible to understand any text".<sup>67</sup> Here Bultmann deals with the objective knowledge and object of history by asking "whether objectivity in the knowledge of historical phenomena, objectivity in interpretation" are possible.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Existence and Faith* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1961), p. 296.

<sup>65</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Essays Philosophical and Theological*, p. 241. Italics deleted.

<sup>66</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>67</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 50.

<sup>68</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Essays Philosophical and Theological*, p. 254. Italics deleted.

The concept of objectivity used here is not to be understood in scientific sense. According to Bultmann, there are two possibilities in the interpretation of historical documents: i) to reconstruct the past, and ii) to learn from historical documents what we need for our present life, i.e. to hear what historical documents have to say for our self-understanding. Bultmann rejects the former for the following reasons: i) We cannot expect objective knowledge because of the historian's subjectivity, or the perspective chosen by the historian. ii) The only thing we can know objectively is that a certain occurrence happened in a certain time and place. This history, a mere combination in time and space, has no meaning.<sup>69</sup> Bultmann concludes that "this 'being in itself' is an illusion of an objectivising type of thinking which is proper in natural science but not in history".<sup>70</sup> It is Bultmann's conviction that when we approach the historical fact as object outside of history we cannot find any meaning from it. "For facts of the past only become historical phenomena when they become significant for a subject which itself stands in history and is involved in it".<sup>71</sup> Therefore, historical phenomena speak only for the

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<sup>69</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, pp. 51-52. *History and Eschatology*, pp. 115-121.

<sup>70</sup>. R.Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, p. 121.

<sup>71</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Essays Philosophical and Theological*, p. 254.

subject who meets them in a living way. On the other hand, the object of interpretation might be supplied by interest in the reconstruction of the context of past history, by psychological interest, or by aesthetic interest. However, "lastly, the object of interpretation can be established by *interest in history as the sphere of life in which human existence moves*, in which it attains its possibilities and develops them, and in reflection upon which it attains understanding of itself and of its own particular possibilities".<sup>72</sup> In other words, if we approach history alive with our own problems, then it really begins to speak to us. Through discussion the past becomes alive, and in learning to know history we learn to know our own present; historical knowledge is at the same time knowledge of ourselves.<sup>73</sup> In this sense, "The 'most subjective' interpretation is in this case the 'most objective', that is, only those who are stirred by the question of their own existence can hear the claim which the text makes".<sup>74</sup> Bultmann concludes his discussion of the interpretation of historical documents by saying that "by understanding history I can gain an understanding of the possibilities of human life and thereby of the

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<sup>72</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>73</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Existence and Faith*, p. 294.

<sup>74</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Essays Philosophical and Theological*, p. 256.

possibilities of my own life".<sup>75</sup>

Bultmann's idea of the Hermeneutic circle is a basis of his theological thought against the *subject-object* pattern. Bultmann believes that the subject-object pattern is a modern form of thought. It has dominated our thought since the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. The isolation of subject and object does not correspond to the original authentic understanding of man and God. The Bible does not regard man as an isolated being over against God and the world, or God and the world as 'objects' for human consideration and at human disposal. The objectified God is no longer the true God, but an idol; the word of God which is reduced to the status of an object is no longer God's word, but a religious word of man.<sup>76</sup> Here, we will not deal with this issue in detail, instead we are pointing out one thing for our later argument; for Bultmann whether historical texts or God, they can only be understood existentially, if they are understood authentically. As we have seen, the necessity of demythologizing can be understood in the same way; Bultmann sees that there is a danger in myth covering the

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<sup>75</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 53.

<sup>76</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Glauben und Verstehen* (Tübingen: J.C.B.Mohr, 1954), vol.I, pp. 27-31. Gogarten, who made the statement in an attempt to defend Bultmann against attack on his theology, also argues that Christian theology has the task of overcoming the subject-object pattern. Cf. Fridrich Gogarten *Demythologizing and History* (London: SCM, 1955), pp. 50ff.

real matter. Myth *objectifies* and speaks in objective statement about a reality which we should encounter existentially. We can conclude that when we see historical phenomena as the historical facts of past, or God in the subject-object pattern, we cannot find any meaning from them.

Bultmann applies the principles of hermeneutics and his view of history to the interpretation of the New Testament, since he considers that "the Bible is an historical document".<sup>77</sup> According to Bultmann, man does have in advance a knowledge of God and a relation to God.<sup>78</sup> "He has a relation to God in his search for God, conscious or unconscious, man's life is moved by the search for God because it is always moved, consciously or unconsciously, by the question about his own personal existence. The question of God and the question of myself are identical".<sup>79</sup> Therefore, the adequate way to put the question, when we interpret the Bible, is "how is man's existence understood in the Bible?"<sup>80</sup> Bultmann thinks that the right question to the Bible is "the question of human existence".<sup>81</sup> Because the 'right question' is concerned

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<sup>77</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>78</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>79</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>80</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup>. R.Bultmann, "Bultmann Replies to His Critics", pp. 191-192.

with the possibilities of understanding human existence, Bultmann claims, now, "it is necessary to discover the adequate conceptions by which such understanding is to be expressed. To discover these conceptions is the task of philosophy".<sup>82</sup> Bultmann takes existentialist philosophy, since he believes that it not only "offers the most adequate perspective and conceptions for understanding human existence", but also because "in this philosophical school human existence is directly the object of attention".<sup>83</sup> Bultmann concedes that the understandings of human existence in existentialist philosophy and that of the New Testament are almost identical. However, according to Bultmann, there is one crucial difference between existentialist philosophy and the New Testament. The point at issue is how we understand the fall.<sup>84</sup> Existentialist philosophy sees that "the corruption resulting from the fall does not extend to the core of the human personality. The New Testament, on the other hand, regards the fall as total".<sup>85</sup> Therefore, while existentialist philosophy insists that one is able to find authentic life by oneself, Bultmann argues that man

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<sup>82</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 54.

<sup>83</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>84</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 55f. R.Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology", pp. 22-34.

<sup>85</sup>. R.Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology", pp. 28-29.



cannot save himself. Man as a fallen being can be aware of his plight, when he knows he is not what he really ought to be and what he would like to be. But the reason why man cannot be what he really ought to be is that "in his present plight every impulse of man is the impulse of a fallen being".<sup>86</sup> Bultmann points out the difference again in these words: "the philosophers are confusing a theoretical possibility with an actual one. For, as the New Testament sees it, man has lost that actual possibility".<sup>87</sup>

When Bultmann attempts to distinguish his interpretation of the Kerygma from existentialist philosophy, he seems to deny the natural man's possibility of moving from fallenness to authenticity by taking fallenness as a natural state or condition. "This means", Bultmann says, "that man is a sinner".<sup>88</sup> In other words, man cannot save himself because he is a sinner, or man cannot escape from sin. Let us see then what sin and faith mean to Bultmann; Bultmann does not regard sin as an independent reality or as a momentary failure of man, but as an expression of the direction of his whole life.

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<sup>86</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>87</sup>. *Ibid.* This argument of Bultmann is seriously challenged by the left wing critics. We will look at their points briefly later. Cf. pp. 329 footnote 76.

<sup>88</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

While God is not the mythological designation for and ontological state of affairs but the personal God.<sup>89</sup> Sin is turning away from Creator, the giver of life, and a turning towards the creation. Therefore man in sin, searching for life, seeks it from the world and not from God. Bultmann explains why man seeks his security not from God is that God is never at his disposal. Man is afraid of the insecurity of his existence in which he lives if he seeks his life from God; "hence, to seek life in it [world] means to have the presumption to seek in the disposable, i.e. to presume to have life at one's own disposal. Hence, the ultimate sin reveals itself to be the false assumption of receiving life not as the gift of the Creator but procuring it by one's own power, of living from one's self rather than from God".<sup>90</sup> In this manner, man is delivered over to slavery of sin because he convulsively clings to what he can achieve. Therefore the zealous fulfilment of the law can be an expression of the fallenness of man into the world, if a man supposes that he can thereby achieve righteousness before God by his own strength.<sup>91</sup> Bultmann gives definition for sin: "The old quest for visible security, the hankering after tangible realities, and the cling to transitory objects, is sin,

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<sup>89</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1974), vol.I. p. 228.

<sup>90</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>91</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

for by it we shut out invisible reality from our lives and refuse God's future which comes to us as a gift".<sup>92</sup> On the other hand, faith can be understood as non-sin. The Bible says that life is always a gift. The authenticity of existence is thus possible only in accepting the gift of life, i.e. in surrender to God as the giver of life. Bultmann states, "Faith is the abandonment of man's own security and the readiness to find security only in the unseen beyond, in God".<sup>93</sup> The authentic life can be grasped in the act of obedience. Such a life means the abandonment of all self-contrived security. Therefore faith is the obedience to the future of God who is not at man's disposal: "obedience is faith because it is the abandonment of pride, and man's tearing himself free from himself--because it is surrender in pure trust, a trust without a guarantee, trust in God".<sup>94</sup>

The way from unauthentic to authentic life, or in biblical terms from sin to faith, is a way which is only open for man. However Bultmann argues that because man cannot liberate himself, he needs help--the grace of God. "The grace of God means *the forgiveness of sin* and brings deliverance from the bondage of the past".<sup>95</sup> Forgiveness

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<sup>92</sup>. R.Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology", p. 19.

<sup>93</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus and Mythology*, p. 40.

<sup>94</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Essays Philosophical and Theological*, p. 175.

<sup>95</sup>. R.Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology", p. 19.

of sins is not a juridical concept nor the remission of punishment. "Rather, forgiveness conveys freedom from sin".<sup>96</sup> Bultmann argues that God has already acted 'in Christ' for our salvation: "In practice authentic life becomes possible only when man is delivered from himself. ... This is precisely the meaning of that which was wrought in Christ. At the very point where man can do nothing, God steps in and acts--indeed he has acted already--on man's behalf".<sup>97</sup> God has acted for man's salvation, and it has been secured only through the death and resurrection of Christ. Therefore, the ground of salvation becomes the death and resurrection of Christ whom man has to accept as a gift. Bultmann says that "it is clear that the salvation-occurrence, viz. Christ's death and resurrection, is the deed of the prevenient grace of God; ... it is an occurrence purely by God's initiative; for man, pure gift; by accepting it he is released from his perverse striving to achieve life or self-hood by his own efforts"<sup>98</sup>

If forgiveness of sin means salvation for human being, and if the ground of salvation is the cross and resurrection of Christ, let us see the exact meaning of 'cross and resurrection'. Bultmann rejects the 'physical'

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<sup>96</sup>. *Ibid.*, p.32.

<sup>97</sup>. *Ibid.*, p.31.

<sup>98</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.I, p. 294.

resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Bultmann believes that the traditions of the empty tomb and the appearances on the physical reality of the risen Lord were later embellishments of the primitive tradition.<sup>99</sup> It is true that Bultmann acknowledges that the disciples did encounter the risen Lord, not as an objective event, but in some other way. As the resurrection was not an objective historical event, according to Bultmann, but it also was not a mythological event added to the significance of the cross:

The resurrection is not mythological event adduced in order to prove the saving efficacy of the cross, but an article of faith just as much as the meaning of the cross itself.<sup>100</sup>

For Bultmann the resurrection has the same meaning as that of the cross. Rather the cross and the resurrection are the same (and one) event in the light of their salvific power; "cross and resurrection form a single, indivisible cosmic event which brings judgement to the world and opens up for man the possibility of authentic life".<sup>101</sup> In this way, the cross of Christ is placed at the centre for the salvation of human being, therefore Bultmann can argue: "The cross effects the forgiveness of

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<sup>99</sup>. R. Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology", p. 39.

<sup>100</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>101</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

all the past and future sins of man, in the sense that the punishment they deserved has been remitted. But the New Testament means more than this. The cross releases men not only from the guilt, but also from the power of sin".<sup>102</sup>

Bultmann argues that we cannot first believe in Christ and then in the strength of that faith believe in the cross. To believe in Christ means to believe in the cross as the cross of Christ. Bultmann argues that: "The saving efficacy of the cross is not derived from the fact that it is the cross of Christ: it is the cross of Christ because it has this saving efficacy".<sup>103</sup> Here we have a question. Bultmann is aware of this, 'How then we come to believe in the saving efficacy of cross?' Bultmann's answer is quite traditional, and he betrays his previous statement that the resurrection is not mythological event adduced to prove the saving efficacy of the cross.

There is only one answer. This is the way in which the cross is proclaimed. It is always proclaimed together with the resurrection.<sup>104</sup>

It is a complicated matter to understand the precise intention of Bultmann's underlying above quotation. But

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<sup>102</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>103</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>104</sup>. *Ibid.*

the next question makes this a little clearer: For Bultmann, the cross is firmly rooted in the cross of the historical Jesus. Bultmann states, "The cross of Christ is no mere mythical event, but a permanent historical fact originating in the past historical event which is the crucifixion of Jesus".<sup>105</sup> Again Bultmann confirms that the salvation-system of Christianity is fundamentally different from that of the mystery-religions and gnosticism due to the historical Jesus: "Here the subject is a historical person, Jesus, and his death the cross only a few years earlier is at the centre of the salvation-occurrence".<sup>106</sup> Here one can raise a question;

1) if the resurrection was not an objective historical event, but an article of faith--the Easter faith,

2) if the meaning of the resurrection is the same as that of the cross, i.e. they are a single event,

3) if when the saving efficacy of the cross was experienced, this became the *cross of Christ*, not vice versa,

4) and if this cross was firmly rooted in the cross of the historical Jesus,

one can ask with above presuppositions 1) and 2) that, how, historically, the faith of the resurrection joined to the significance of 'cross' of Jesus and became the

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<sup>105</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>106</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.I, p. 295.

fundamental Christian Kerygma, or the same point in different expression, how the preaching of the cross and resurrection arose. It might be answered with above presuppositions 3) and 4) that; the first followers of Jesus realized the saving efficacy from the life and death of Jesus. They understood that God did not abandon Jesus on the cross. For them, who still followed the way of Jesus, Jesus was their Lord, and his cross became the cross of Christ. This conviction of the victory of God was expressed in a formula, 'God has raised Jesus from the death'. The resurrection kerygma thus was a powerful confession of the saving efficacy of the cross, and this was the rise of the Easter faith. In fact Bultmann is prepared to acknowledge that;

The decision which Jesus' disciples had once made to affirm and accept his sending by 'following' him, had to be made anew and radically in consequence of his crucifixion. *The cross*, so to say, raised the question of decision once more. Little as it could throw into question the content of his message, all the more it could and did render questionable his legitimation, his claim to be God's messenger bring the last, decisive word. The Church had to surmount the scandal of the cross and did it in the Easter faith.<sup>107</sup>

As above quotation indicates, Bultmann could agree with this solution about the meaning of the Easter faith, but he would 'not'. Bultmann's answer to the question

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<sup>107</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45. Underline added.





stands once again in the same point as his first answer on the understanding the saving efficacy of the cross:

It would be wrong at this point to raise again the problem of how this preaching arose historically, as though that could vindicate its truth, that would be tie our faith in the word of God to the results of historical research.<sup>108</sup>

This statement of Bultmann indicates that he deliberately avoids the point of the question. He seems unhappy with such a question. Bultmann's intention seems to be that Christian faith should be based on something 'absolute', i.e. faith should not be judged on its validity by historical research, whose results are always relative. However, this does not mean, strictly speaking, that faith and history belong to two different fields, or that we cannot experience salvation from the historical Jesus. We will examine this issue further.

According to Bultmann, the saving event of the cross and resurrection of Christ does not take place before it is preached or delivered as the Word. Bultmann says that "Christ meets us in the preaching as one crucified and risen. He meets us in the word of preaching and nowhere else".<sup>109</sup> God becomes real in my personal existence only

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<sup>108</sup>. R.Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology", p. 41.

<sup>109</sup>. *Ibid.*

by His Word spoken here and now".<sup>110</sup> In Bultmann the Word means the Christian kerygma, the kerygmatic Christ, or the cross and resurrection of Christ, and all of them have the same meanings in different expressions.<sup>111</sup> Bultmann argues that the saving event cannot happen without the preaching of the Word.<sup>112</sup> In this sense "the word is a part of the saving event", Bultmann goes further, "...if the proclamation of the Word is a continuation of the Christ event, and if Christ is present in the Word of the church, then the conception as a whole leads to the affirmation that Christ is himself the Word".<sup>113</sup> Here we have to make one thing clear. When we hear the word of the cross and resurrection, we can never take the saving efficacy of the word for granted, i.e. the Word who saves can only be encountered in our decision. Address does not confront us with this or that to choose as I please: it forces a

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<sup>110</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and mythology*, p. 79.

<sup>111</sup>. Cf. R.Bultmann, *Faith and Understanding* (London: SCM, 1966), pp. 298ff.

<sup>112</sup>. Bultmann, of course, says that we can meet Christ in the Sacraments. Cf. *Kerygma and Myth*, vol.I, pp. 36, 110; *History and Eschatology*, pp. 51f. But the meaning of the sacraments in this case is the same as the Word preached. "The meaning of these rites is simply that it is precisely through them that the once for all salvation-occurrence in Christ's death and resurrection is made present and actual for the individual, so that it may be personally appropriated by him". *Existence and Faith*, p. 200.

<sup>113</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Faith and Understanding*, p. 308.

decision.<sup>114</sup> Therefore Bultmann could argue that: "The word of God never becomes our property. The test of whether or not we have heard it correctly is whether we are prepared always to hear it anew, to ask for it in every decision of every life."<sup>115</sup> In other words, when Bultmann argues that the saving event takes place in the preaching of it, this does not mean that we can ever gain self-understanding 'automatically'. When Christ comes to us in the preaching, the personal decision is *required*. Bultmann states, "The summons must always be heard afresh. Belief in God, indeed, is never something we can have as a possession. On the contrary, it always implies a decision to be taken".<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Glauben und Verstehen*, vol.I, pp. 283-284.

<sup>115</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Existence and Faith*, p. 169.

<sup>116</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Essays Philosophical and Theological*, pp. 14-15. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 62.

### 3. The Life and Demand of Jesus

In this section we will examine how Bultmann understands the historical Jesus. We will limit our sources to some of his books: *The history of the Synoptic Tradition*, *Jesus and the Word*, 'The Proclamation of Jesus' in *Primitive Christianity in Its Contemporary Setting*, 'The study of the Synoptic Gospels' in *Form Criticism*, and 'The Message of Jesus' in *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.I. The limitation is due to the fact that Bultmann establishes several principles which he follows in these books; Firstly, above all, they have been written by the same method, i.e. in which the sayings and acts of Jesus are constructed by *historical research*. *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* is the basis for other books. When Bultmann takes his sources for historical Jesus, mainly from the similitude and the dominical sayings, he relies on those sayings which have been proved as authentic, or on those which have possibilities to be authentic in *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, whom we have pointed out in section one.<sup>117</sup> Secondly, as we have seen in the previous section, Bultmann believes that history reconstructed merely with place and time of past cannot give us any meaning. So Bultmann approaches the history

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<sup>117</sup>. Once Bultmann himself said that the source for the historical Jesus in *Jesus and the Word* was based on *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*. Cf. *Jesus and the Word* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 14.

of Jesus with two presuppositions, 'pre-understanding' and 'life-relationship'. Bultmann is convinced that, by hermeneutical principles, he could encounter the meaning of history. He confessed that his book, *Jesus and the Word*, is information about "his encounter with history" and his encounter with "Jesus as a part of history in which we have our being".<sup>118</sup>

The points of *Leben-Jesu-Forschung* since the nineteenth century can be characterized largely into three categories which are closely related to each other; i) the outward course of Jesus' life, ii) the Messianic consciousness of Jesus, and iii) the content of Jesus' message, whether taking Jesus' eschatological or ethical sayings, or both. Out of three categories Bultmann is primarily interested in the last issue. Bultmann expresses that his aim is not reconstructing the biographical data of Jesus' life nor drawing the psychology and personality of Jesus. Therefore our concern should be given to Bultmann's interpretation of Jesus' message. Nevertheless, in order to understand Jesus' message, it will be helpful to look at Bultmann's understanding of the 'life' and 'consciousness' of Jesus as a background of his message.

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<sup>118</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4, 6-7.

## The Background of Jesus' Message

Bultmann understands Jesus in the category of Judaism. "Jesus was not a 'Christian', but a Jew, and his preaching is couched in the thought forms and imagery of Judaism".<sup>119</sup> Jesus originally belonged to the sect of the Baptist, and the Jesus-sect was an offshoot of the John-sect.<sup>120</sup> Jesus began his public activity in the popular mood of messianic hope. As a Jew Jesus shared the same traditions with his contemporaries: Jesus did not oppose the religious practice which were customary for pious Jews, such as alms giving, prayers, fasting, the temple worship, and the offering of sacrifice.<sup>121</sup> "Jesus always agreed with the scribes of his time in accepting without question the *authority of the (Old Testament) Law*".<sup>122</sup> Therefore, the preaching of Jesus had not extended beyond the boundaries of the Jewish people.<sup>123</sup>

Bultmann sees the life of Jesus, in general, as a prophet and a rabbi. On the one hand, when Jesus is characterized on the basis of his *eschatological message*, he can be seen as a prophet. According to Bultmann, Jesus was actually called prophet several times; "his ministry

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<sup>119</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in Its Contemporary Setting*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>120</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, p. 24.

<sup>121</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 62ff.

<sup>122</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>123</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

was rightly characterized when it was said he was a prophet".<sup>124</sup> On the other hand, when Jesus is viewed on the basis of his *ethical message*, he can be described as a rabbi. Jesus took his place as a teacher in the synagogue; he gathered around him a circle of pupils; he disputed over questions of the Law with pupils and opponents or with people seeking knowledge; he used the same methods of argument and the same turns of speech as Jewish rabbis.<sup>125</sup> Bultmann says that "Jesus actually lived as a Jewish rabbi".<sup>126</sup>

But between Jesus and the prophets of the Old Testament and the Jewish rabbis, there were fundamental differences not only in his external life but also in his interpretations of God, man, and the Law; Jesus was less bound by forms than other rabbis. There were many women among Jesus' adherents, who were elsewhere never included among the followers of a rabbi. "His intercourse with sinners, prostitutes, and publicans, which is surely historical, is also alien to the practice of a rabbi".<sup>127</sup> More importantly, for instance, as a prophet Jesus' announcement concerning the Kingdom of God differed from

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<sup>124</sup>. R.Bultmann, "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels", p. 71.

<sup>125</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, pp. 57f. Italics deleted.

<sup>126</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>127</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

apocalyptic expectation of the other prophets. As a rabbi Jesus criticized formal legalism, in which obedience to the Law was an achievement of man. Jesus demanded radical obedience involving man's whole being before God. Jesus' life style and his interpretation of the Law could evoke a conflict with the scribes and authorities. Jewish court in Jerusalem could have some part on the death of Jesus.<sup>128</sup> But for Bultmann it is difficult to make clear exactly what roles the religious leaders, the Jewish authorities and the Romans played for Jesus' death. Bultmann believes that the death of Jesus was unpolitical and at the same time political: 'Unpolitical'--because Jesus had no political aim, nor did Jesus' message contain any social programme to change existing structures. 'Political'--because the leadership of Jesus, though he had no political purpose, "aroused considerable popular excitement".<sup>129</sup> Therefore, "as he came up to Jerusalem with his followers his arrival was viewed by the procurator as politically dangerous".<sup>130</sup> Bultmann concludes concerning the death of Jesus that: "It is probable that they [the Jewish authorities], as in other cases, worked hand in hand with the Romans in the interest

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<sup>128</sup>. Cf. R.Bultmann, "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels", p. 72.

<sup>129</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, p. 25.

<sup>130</sup>. R.Bultmann, "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels", p. 72.



of political tranquillity. At least there can be no doubt that Jesus like other agitators died on the cross as a Messianic prophet".<sup>131</sup>

It is quite difficult to conclude that for Bultmann whether Jesus had 'Messianic consciousness' or not. The difficulty is partly due to the fact that the term 'Messiah' or 'Messiahship' is ambiguous; i) The 'Messiah', by origin, belongs to the nationalistic type of Jewish eschatology. 'Anointed' is a designation of the king in the Old Testament.<sup>132</sup> If we define the word Messiah like this, for Bultmann it is clear that Jesus did not have Messianic consciousness: "'Messiah' was the term for the eschatological ruler; the word means 'the anointed' and came to mean simply 'king'. But it was not as a king, but as a prophet and a rabbi that Jesus appeared".<sup>133</sup> Further, Bultmann believes that Jesus did not use any of the Christological titles to describe his own person, and that he refused to allow others to identify him with any of the messianic figures of the Jewish traditions. Bultmann does not rule out the possibility that Jesus spoke of the coming Son of Man. But in this case, according to Bultmann, Jesus spoke of the Son of Man in

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<sup>131</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, p. 26.

<sup>132</sup>. Hans Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1969), p. 72.

<sup>133</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.I, p. 27.

the third person without identifying himself with him.<sup>134</sup> Therefore, if we measure the Christological titles in the New Testament by traditional messianic ideas, Bultmann concludes that Jesus did not identify himself with any of these conceptions. ii) If the term Messiah connotes the divinity or pre-existence of Jesus, needless to say, Jesus certainly had no such concepts of Messianic consciousness. It was at a later stage in the Hellenistic Church that the concepts of "divine nature" and "pre-existence" of Christ was added to some titles such as 'Kyrios' and 'Son of God'.<sup>135</sup> However, there is a wide agreement that originally the New testament titles were functional rather than ontological, i.e. first the titles were applied to Jesus primarily not because of his nature, but his significance and special function<sup>136</sup>--*the function of salvation bearer*. Bultmann also argues that; "All these titles, though their original meaning may have been various, agree in being designation for the eschatological salvation-bringer".<sup>137</sup> So the question of Messianic

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<sup>134</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>135</sup>. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 128ff. R.H.Fuller, *The Foundation of New Testament Christology* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1965), pp. 194ff, 230ff.

<sup>136</sup>. Cf. Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1963), pp. 3ff. R.H.Fuller, *The Foundation of New Testament Christology*, pp. 130f, 197. I.Howard Marshall, *The Origins of New Testament Christology* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990), 2nd ed., pp. 83 f.

<sup>137</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.I, p. 49.

consciousness can be modified to whether Jesus had self-consciousness of salvation bearer. iii) As far as the consciousness of salvation bearer is concerned, Bultmann is sure that Jesus as the salvation bringer had a unique consciousness of his mission. Bultmann prefers to call this 'eschatological figure' or 'prophetic consciousness'.<sup>138</sup> But this consciousness of Jesus was different from that of prophets in the Old Testament, i.e. Jesus' consciousness expresses that "he has been sent in the last decisive hour".<sup>139</sup> The eschatological preaching shows Jesus' self-understanding that his *person and message* was the sign of salvation, and the ethical preaching shows that Jesus in his own person demanded the decision (these points will be clear in examining his message). Jesus' charismatic proclamation for salvation lies in his certainty that he knows the *will of God*; "He is certain that he is acquainted with the unswerving will of God, who sternly demands the good from man and, through the message by which He is preached, thrusts man into the alternative of salvation or condemnation. It is this certainty which gives Jesus the consciousness of standing at the end of time. His message grows neither out of weariness with the world and longing for the world beyond nor out of fanciful speculation, but out of knowing the

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<sup>138</sup>. Cf. this thesis pp. 22ff, 26 footnote 32.

<sup>139</sup>. R.Bultmann, "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels", p. 62.

world's futility and man's corruption in God's eyes and out of knowing the will of God".<sup>140</sup>

### The Message of Jesus

Bultmann believes that both the eschatological and ethical teachings of Jesus are original. They "belong equally to the oldest stratum of the tradition, so that one can hardly call either one of them secondary".<sup>141</sup> Further, on the one hand the critical analysis of the text shows that later sayings have often added to an older eschatological stratum. On the other hand, the community saw in Jesus the Messiah, and expected his coming in Messianic glory. Therefore, concerning the ethical sayings, it is incredible that they would transform him into a rabbi when they looked upon him as Messiah.<sup>142</sup> Bultmann deals with the message of Jesus under the categories of the eschatological and the ethical sayings, which represent the life style of a prophet and a rabbi, and of which contents are the Kingdom of God and the Will of God respectively.

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<sup>140</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. I, p. 23.

<sup>141</sup>. R.Bultmann, "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels", p. 73.

<sup>142</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, pp. 124ff.

The Kingdom of God. The dominant concept of Jesus' eschatological message is the Kingdom of God. But for Jesus the Kingdom of God does not mean the national, political, or apocalyptic Kingdom, where God's world judgement of all man has replaced the downfall of national overthrown for the benefit of Israel, or where the deliverance of the whole world is expected at the last day.<sup>143</sup> "Jesus thus *rejects the whole content of apocalyptic speculation*, as he rejects also the calculation for the time and the watching for signs".<sup>144</sup>

The Kingdom of God is the power which comes by the grace of God. For man this means 'salvation' which calls man from his worldly security; "The Kingdom of God is deliverance for men. It is that *eschatological* deliverance which ends everything earthly. This deliverance is the only deliverance which can properly be so called; therefore it demands of man decision".<sup>145</sup>

Bultmann sees that there are both future and present elements in the Kingdom of God. But the emphasis is placed to the existential present--the existential decision of 'now': "The Kingdom of God is a power *which, although it is entirely future wholly determines the present*. It determines the present because it now compels

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<sup>143</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 41ff.

<sup>144</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>145</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

man to decision".<sup>146</sup> However, Jesus was convinced that the Kingdom of God was already dawning in his 'works' and with his own 'person'. Jesus saw that God's reign was already breaking in on the fact that by the divine power that filled him he began to drive out the evil spirit.<sup>147</sup> Bultmann argues, "What is new and really his own about it all is the certainty with which he says, '*Now the time is come! God's Reign is breaking in!....* But what are the signs of the time? He himself! *His presence, his deed his message!*'"<sup>148</sup>

The Will of God. Obedience was the essence of Jewish morality in the time of Jesus. This obedience, however, was obedience to a purely formal authority, overemphasizing on ritual and ceremonial rules. In interpretation of the demand of God, Jesus's message was a great protest against Jewish legalism, i.e. against a form of piety which regards the will of God as expressed in the written Law and the Tradition which interprets it. The formal and external authority of Scripture was evidently given up in the message of Jesus.<sup>149</sup> If man decides to obey just the legal authority of the Law by

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<sup>146</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>147</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.I, p. 7.

<sup>148</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>149</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 11. *Jesus and the Word*, pp. 68-69, 76.

fulfilling some specific demands, it is not true obedience. In this kind of decision man stands outside his action, therefore he is not completely obedient. "For where the thought of obedience is not taken completely in earnest and a man sees his obedience always as his own achievement, there the spirit of self-righteousness and pride enters in".<sup>150</sup> Bultmann calls such attitude of man the 'will of man' or 'sin'; "a man's failure or mistake in the present has in the eyes of Jesus not the relative character of a stage of development, but the absolute character of sin".<sup>151</sup>

According to Bultmann, Jesus' ethical sayings does not include anything for world-reformation, civil rights, a social or political programme.<sup>152</sup> Unlike the prophets and rabbis, "his preaching is directed not primarily to the people as a whole, but to *individuals*".<sup>153</sup> Concerning the ethical teachings Jesus' fundamental hope was to make known the position of each man before God. Therefore, the Judgement also "is coming not on nations but on individuals whom coming salvation will bless".<sup>154</sup>

It is true that the ethic of Jesus, like the Jewish,

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<sup>150</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>151</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>152</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 103ff.

<sup>153</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.I, p. 25.

<sup>154</sup>. *Ibid.* Cf. *Jesus and the Word*, p. 108.

is an ethic of obedience. But "fundamental difference is that Jesus has conceived radically the idea of obedience".<sup>155</sup> Jesus demanded obedience without any secondary motive. Jesus proclaimed that "God requires radical obedience. He claims man whole--and wholly".<sup>156</sup> Jesus taught man to see himself "as called to *decision*--decision between good and evil, decision for God's will or for their own will".<sup>157</sup> The decision for the will of God means decision for salvation which is offered by God as gift. "This deliverance confronts man as an Either-Or".<sup>158</sup> On the other hand, the will of God, in so far as it determines conduct towards other men, can be designated as the commencement of love. There is no radical obedience to God which does not have to prove itself in the concrete situation of meeting one's neighbour, i.e. in loving our neighbour we prove our obedience to God. This means that we can love our neighbour only when we surrender our will completely to God's will.<sup>159</sup> However, Jesus refrained from making the love-commandment concrete in specific prescriptions. "Jesus thought of love neither

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<sup>155</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, p. 73.

<sup>156</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.I. p. 13.

<sup>157</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>158</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>159</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115. *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.I, p. 18.



as a virtue which belongs to the perfection of man, nor as an act to the well-being of society, but as an overcoming of self-will in the concrete situation of life in which man encounters other men".<sup>160</sup> In other words, if man surrenders to the will of God against his own will he knows what he must do in his situation: "It is assumed that every one can know that, and therefore Jesus' demand for love is no revelation of a new principle of ethics nor a new conception of the dignity of man".<sup>161</sup>

For Bultmann Jesus did not summon men to believe in his 'person'. But he acknowledges that the person of Jesus was involved in his demand for decision. As we have argued, when Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God, Jesus' person was the sign of arrival of the Kingdom of God, or salvation. In the same way, when Jesus demanded the decision of 'now' for between salvation and sin, or the will of God and the will of man, the person of Jesus was the sign of decision. Bultmann says, "*He in his own person signified the demand for decision*".<sup>162</sup>

Bultmann believes the eschatological and ethical sayings of Jesus form a unity. In them the same fundamental view of God and of man is presupposed. For

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<sup>160</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, p. 112

<sup>161</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>162</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.I, p. 9.

Bultmann the reason why we fail to see them as a unity is because we fail to see them in the final decisive sense; "there is an inner connection: Both things, the eschatological proclamation and the ethical demand, direct man to the fact that he is thereby brought before God, that God stands before him; both directing him into his Now as the hour of decision for God".<sup>163</sup>

If Jesus demands decision for between the will of God and the will of man, let us see whether man is able to decide for himself. Here Bultmann's answer would be positive. He says, "Now alone has meaning, which is absorbed wholly in the present moment. Now must man know what to do and leave undone.... That is meaning of decision... whoever sees man in the crisis of decision and recognizes this as the essential of human existence, assumes that not on the basis of any past experience or rational deductions, but directly from the immediate situation".<sup>164</sup> Therefore, Jesus does not suggest the concrete contents of demand; "he can only leave the decision to the man in his concrete situation".<sup>165</sup> Here it seems that Bultmann concedes that man has a possibility of winning or losing himself by his own decisions. If man

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<sup>163</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.I, p. 21. Cf. *Jesus and the Word*, p. 130. "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels", p. 73.

<sup>164</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, p. 88.

<sup>165</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

does not have an actual possibility we can ask, 'How then he be held responsible?' Bultmann says that man has responsibility for his decision; "The responsibility is put on man; he must answer for his own actions; they are regarded as the expression of his being, and by them he is judged".<sup>166</sup>

At this point, one may raise a question that this view is not consistent with the view of saving event of the cross and the resurrection, i.e. man cannot liberate himself by his own efforts, so he needs the grace of God acted in Jesus Christ, for which we have argued in section two. This issue has been controversial, as Harvey criticizes that Bultmann's view is equivocal: "When he is debating with orthodoxy, Bultmann insists that the fall cannot refer to an event in the past or fatelike state which holds man in his grip so that he is helpless. Otherwise, man could not be held responsible for his condition. On the other hand, when Bultmann is debating with the existentialists he presupposes just this orthodox notion of the fall that he argues is mythological".<sup>167</sup> Let us see then the meaning of 'faith' and the 'grace of God' in Bultmann. The following quotation will show the relationship of sin, faith and the grace of God.

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<sup>166</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>167</sup>. Van Austin Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer*, p. 145.

Faith is for him [Jesus] the power, in particular movements of life, to take seriously the conviction of the omnipotence of God; it is the certainty that in such particular moments God's activity is really experienced; it is the conviction that the distant God is really the God near at hand, if man will only relinquish his usual attitude and be ready to see the nearness of God. In the sense of Jesus it is possible to have faith if one is obedient.<sup>168</sup>

As we have seen in section two, it is true that Bultmann argues that man is a sinner, but just because "sin is the character which belongs inevitably to the man remote from God who denies the claim of God".<sup>169</sup> This does not mean that man is in original sin, or that sin is a nature of man: "sin is not a condition of nature but the evil will of man".<sup>170</sup> In other words, "sin is not a sort of appendage to man; it is the characteristic for sinful humanity. Hence Jesus does not preach that all are sinners, but speaks to sinful men".<sup>171</sup> As 'sin' is not understood ontologically but existentially Bultmann also understands 'faith' existentially. Faith, non-sin, means the power which we can experience in *particular moments of life*. Therefore, "Jesus does not speak of faith in God in general but only with reference to definite, actual

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<sup>168</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, pp. 190-191. Underline added.

<sup>169</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>170</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>171</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

situation".<sup>172</sup> When a man, in particular moments, meets seriously his sinfulness clinging his self against the will of God, at the same time he experiences the power, which is faith making him be ready for God. Here attention is needed that we should not understand 'from sin to faith' as a transition, or as happening one by one in order. This happens simultaneously as a new experience. This experience of the power, faith, can be expressed as the grace of God. 'The certainty that in such particular moments God's activity is really experienced' in above quotation is nothing else than 'the grace of God'. In this sense, the grace of God can be understood as non-sin if we understand them existentially: "for the concepts of sin and grace have their origin not in theoretical reflection, they are the expression of man's experience that the reality of his own existence is determined by sin and grace".<sup>173</sup> Therefore, the terms sin, faith, and grace are understood existentially at one point; for Bultmann there is another term which unites them--'decision', or 'obedience'. Bultmann believes that only in existential decision, in the real sense, man can experience his sinfulness and the grace of God together. As argued in section two, though man is a sinner, though he needs help, and though he hears the kerygma of the

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<sup>172</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>173</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

cross and resurrection of Christ, if he does not encounter the kerygma through his decision, the kerygma is just meaningless words of a religion. Therefore for Bultmann the word 'decision' denotes man's awareness of his sinfulness and helplessness, and at the same time, as the other side of the same token, man's experience of the grace of God as well; "God's grace can be known only when a man realizes his utter helplessness".<sup>174</sup> So, talking of the grace of God has always confessional meaning, by those who have already experienced it. Strictly in this sense, Bultmann could argue that man can be delivered only by the grace of God. Accordingly, if we ask the same issue in a slightly different expression with emphasis on the responsibility of each person, 'whether man is able to decide for the future of God', Bultmann would say 'yes'. He argues that when "the whole man is compelled to decision the whole man is here at stake, and determines by his choice his whole future".<sup>175</sup> He concludes: "A man becomes through the decision either a sinner or righteous".<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>174</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>175</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>176</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

#### 4. Continuity between the Message of Jesus and that of the Church

It has been argued that Bultmann distinguishes the historical Jesus from the Christ of the kerygma; it is the Christ of faith who is the grounds of Christian faith; Bultmann takes the kerygmatic Christ as source of salvation; Bultmann is not interested in the historical Jesus, and he fails to solve the problem of history and faith. In this section we will concentrate solely on examining the continuity between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith. We will approach this firstly by looking at the 'historical continuity' between the contents of the proclamation of the historical Jesus and that of the post-Easter church and by which we will know to what extent they are continuous.<sup>177</sup> Secondly, by

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<sup>177</sup>. The terms 'the historical continuity' and 'material continuity' are often obscure. Käsemann and Ebeling argue that the historical continuity and the material continuity are inseparable and they are unsatisfactory terminologies. (E. Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, pp. 36f. G. Ebeling, *Theology and Proclamation*, pp. 58f) Nevertheless these terms have been widely used in Bultmann and Bultmannians without clear definition. Therefore although we admit that these are not clearly distinguishable, the definition of these terms are necessary for this thesis.

In this thesis, the 'historical continuity' means the continuity between the content of the message of Jesus and that of the proclamation of the post-Easter Church. In strict sense, the historical continuity can be a real continuity. The 'material continuity' indicates the continuity which is related to the person or the form of the proclamation between Jesus and the Church: e.g. i) The time elements--concerning the Reign of God, for Jesus the decisive event is still future, while for the church it has already occurred. ii) Messiahship and authority often

comparing the 'material continuity' between the historical Jesus and the Christ of the kerygma, we will understand where the differences between the two lie. In doing this, we will recognize that there is a real continuity between the two, and the differences can be overcome.

The historical continuity means to establish continuity between the preaching of Jesus and that of the primitive Church, whose fundamental kerygma is the cross and the resurrection of Christ. There are two types of attempt to demonstrate the historical continuity. The first way of attempt is to show that Jesus' activities in his words and deeds contain the kerygma, i.e. the proclamation of Jesus had already *kerygmatic character*. Bultmann suggests two processes concerning the interpretation of the activities of Jesus; "the first is bound to the framework of traditional historical-critical research which seeks to view the event in its objectivity. The second attempts to understand history in terms of an existential relation to it".<sup>178</sup> Bultmann explains the relationship of these two processes that "the existential interpretation presupposes the historical-critical in so

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linked with Messianic titles and Messianic consciousness. iii) The relationship between 'the proclaimer' and 'the proclaimed', in Fuchs and Ebeling between 'faith of Jesus' and 'faith in Jesus'.

<sup>178</sup>. R. Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus", p. 27.



far as it obviously presupposes a knowledge of historical facts".<sup>179</sup> This means that Bultmann does not ignore the objective historical facts critically attested by historical research. Rather Bultmann always begins his investigation with a historical analysis of the text.<sup>180</sup> What Bultmann objects to is that the historical facts themselves can give us any meaning, if we meet these facts in the subject-object pattern. He believes that historical fact should be encountered by hermeneutical principles, i.e. existential interpretation. As we have seen in section one and three, Bultmann himself followed these two processes, and showed the results of the processes: Historical analysis shows that the Synoptic Gospels may not be the sources for the biography and personality of Jesus but they contain many sayings of Jesus by which we can understand the purpose and intention of Jesus. Thus Bultmann paid his whole attention to encounter 'what Jesus purposed', and interpreted existentially the proclamation of Jesus which was supplied by the critical-historical research. In Bultmann the contents of the kerygma of the cross and the resurrection (argued in section two) and those of the historical Jesus (argued in section three) have the *same* system at these

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<sup>179</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup>. Cf. Leonhard Goppelt, *Theology and the New Testament* (Michigan: WM.B.Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981), ed. J.Rolfte, vol.I, p. 265.

points; i) for both the final goal is salvation of man, a new self-understanding, ii) both radically demands a decision here and now, and iii) by decision (the grace of God) man can be free from the unauthentic life, sin--pursuing the worldly and self-contrived security. Therefore Bultmann admits that there are clear continuities in the first type of the historical continuity. It signifies that the sayings of Jesus have saving efficacy like the kerygma. It is a quite consistent view of Bultmann throughout his works. The basic structures for this are established by his early works in *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (1921) and *Jesus and the Word* (1926). In *Jesus and Paul* (1936), Bultmann argues that the words of Jesus can have the same significance as the preached kerygma;

...That is, he made his appearance in the consciousness that God had sent him in the last hour of the world. But this means that the decision to which he summons men by his proclamation is the definitive decision; that precisely the fact that he now summons men to repentance is the final proof of God's grace; that his coming is God's grace in the last hour; that in so far as anyone hears his word, God's salvation is now freely offered to him. Indeed, Jesus demands decision with reference to his ministry:<sup>181</sup>

Bultmann affirms in the different expression that the earliest followers of Jesus who heard the sayings of Jesus were forced to the decision in *Theology of the New*

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<sup>181</sup>. R. Bultmann, *Existence and Faith*, pp. 195-196.

*Testament* vol. I (1948), i.e. before Jesus' death, by responding to Jesus' proclamation the disciples could make decision for the will of God.<sup>182</sup> Lastly, Bultmann concludes in "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus" (1962) that "now, it is clear, first of all, that Jesus' preaching had 'kerygmatic' character".<sup>183</sup> He continues in his discussion with his pupil that "the message of Jesus as well as the kerygma require a break with the old aeon and readiness for the new already appearing, a submitting to the judgement of God and the reception of his grace".<sup>184</sup> We conclude that as far as the first type of the historical continuity is concerned the claims of the historical Jesus and that of the primitive Church are identical, and that this can be a real continuity on which other continuities base.

While the first type of establishing the historical continuity is to demonstrate that the proclamation of the historical Jesus had kerygmatic character, the second way of attempt is to prove that "the kerygma presupposes not only the 'that' but also the 'what' and the 'how' of the historical Jesus".<sup>185</sup> This means whether the person and

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<sup>182</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.I, p. 44.

<sup>183</sup>. R.Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus", p. 27.

<sup>184</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>185</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

activity of Jesus are contained in the kerygma. Bultmann thinks that it is not easy to make the second type of the historical continuity from Paul and John, since according to Bultmann, they are interested only in the 'that' of Jesus. Bultmann argues, "Paul and John, each in his own way, indicate that we do not need to go beyond the 'that'. Paul proclaims the incarnate, crucified, and risen Lord; that is, his kerygma requires only the 'that' of the life of Jesus and the fact of his crucifixion".<sup>186</sup> But this does not mean that Paul has his independent theology apart from Jesus. Bultmann acknowledges that Paul is in complete agreement with Jesus concerning the law, the commandment of love, etc.<sup>187</sup>: "The preaching of Paul is eschatological through and through. The concept which could be called the main theme of Paul's preaching is eschatological--the concept of the 'righteousness of God', of 'justification' (*δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*); and this concept corresponds to the 'Kingdom of God'".<sup>188</sup> Bultmann again expresses the significance of the historical Jesus for the theology of Paul that; "...that significance can be expressed in one sentence. *It is the historical person of Jesus that makes Paul's proclamation the Gospel.* For Paul proclaims neither a new idea of God nor a new concept of

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<sup>186</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>187</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Faith and Understanding*, pp. 223 ff.

<sup>188</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

the Messiah".<sup>189</sup> Nevertheless Bultmann believes that in Paul and John there are only a few statements mentioning 'directly' the life and death of Jesus. So he does not attempt to make the second type of the historical continuity. But by examining the material continuity we will understand the second way of the historical continuity is no less, since the historical and the material continuity are not completely independent to each other.

The material continuity means the 'forms' and 'person' of the proclamations between Jesus and the post-Easter church. It has been argued that there are clear discrepancies in the material continuity. We can summarize them in two basic points; one is related to time elements, and the other is related to the problem of 'the proclaimer and the proclaimed'.

Firstly, concerning the time elements, there are two principal ways in which Bultmann has been misunderstood; i) "[He] sets his face firmly against all who would see an element in the teaching of Jesus in which the Kingdom is present".<sup>190</sup> This view can be easily developed to the more serious misapprehension that there is a clear discontinuity between Jesus and Paul, i.e. "Bultmann sees Jesus as looking forward to the decisive event in the

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<sup>189</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>190</sup>. Norman Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* (London; SCM, 1963), p. 114.

future and Paul as looking back upon it in the immediate past".<sup>191</sup> ii) The Apocalyptic hope is the true *background* to the proclamation of Jesus, i.e. the hope of Jesus is the hope of apocalyptic Judaism with its expectation of the coming of the Son of Man.<sup>192</sup> If these views are argued onesidedly, they are groundless. Bultmann demonstrates that there are some sayings of Jesus which contain the idea of "present" salvation.<sup>193</sup> For Bultmann this idea is the principal criterion for discerning the original sayings of Jesus from the 'general prophecies of future salvation' of Jewish literature. Therefore, for Bultmann the eschatological mood which determines *present* is always the most important criterion for identifying the authentic word of Jesus.<sup>194</sup> Besides, as we have seen the background of Jesus' message in section three, Bultmann does not see that the background of Jesus' message is apocalyptic. He asserts that "Jesus was not an apocalypticist".<sup>195</sup> We also can argue, of course, the present element of Jesus's message by arguing that the disciples could experience salvation before the death of Jesus, for which we have

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<sup>191</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 121. Cf. Van Austin Harvey, *Op. cit.*, p. 173.

<sup>192</sup>. Norman Perrin, *Op.cit.*, pp. 105, 126.

<sup>193</sup>. See this thesis, p. 23ff.

<sup>194</sup>. R.Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Traditions*, pp. 105, 126.

<sup>195</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 109. Cf. "The History of the Synoptic Gospels", pp. 56 ff.

already examined in the first way of the historical continuity.

Secondly, there is a formal distinction between the Synoptics and Paul that in the kerygma the mythical form of the Son of God has appeared in place of the historical person of Jesus. Bultmann says that "the Christ of the Kerygma is not a historical figure which could enjoy continuity with the historical Jesus".<sup>196</sup> This means that "the Christ-kerygma is a Christological kerygma",<sup>197</sup> while the preaching of Jesus is not a Christological proclamation, i.e. there is no 'direct' Christological statement of Messiahship in the sayings of Jesus. This distinction today has been developed to the relationship between the proclaimer and the proclaimed, or between the faith of Jesus and the faith in Jesus. As pointed out in Section three, this issue can have a trap if we rely on only the explicit Christological statement and Messianic consciousness. However, in the New Testament scholarship, one of the popular approaches to this issue has been through the Christological titles by asking whether Jesus made use of any of the New Testament titles informing his own self-understanding during his mission or in communication this to others. Bultmann is no exception. But, though Bultmann does not think that Jesus used any of

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<sup>196</sup>. R.Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus", p. 18

<sup>197</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 238.

the Christological titles to describes his person, he believes that the self-understanding of Jesus can 'imply' a Christology. Bultmann argues that; "in his life time he had demanded decision for his person as the bearer of the Word; the Church has now made this decision. Jesus' call to decision implies a Christology".<sup>198</sup> In other words, "in so far as Jesus understood himself as an 'eschatological' phenomenon we can say that his proclamation implied a Christology".<sup>199</sup> This implicit Christology became explicit in the kerygma. "In the primitive community the Christology has become explicit to the extent that it confesses; Jesus has been made Messiah by God and will come as Messiah".<sup>200</sup> Then we can argue that there is a Christological continuity to the extent that the implicit becomes the explicit.

In this section we have argued that there is real continuity between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith. This means that we can experience salvation from the historical Jesus encountered by historical research. This also means that there is a point of contact between history and faith. However, there remain some problems;

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<sup>198</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.I, p. 43.

<sup>199</sup>. R.Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus", p. 29.

<sup>200</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Faith and Understanding*, p. 237.



why Bultmann continues to insist that the object of faith is the Christ of the kerygma, not the historical Jesus; if faith depends upon historian's labour (or historical experience), does not Christian faith become relative?; or similarly, if the figure of the historical Jesus is seen in various ways are according to historians, can we claim the uniqueness of the historical Jesus and the Christian faith? Before tackling these issues, in the next chapter, we will approach the second type of historical continuity again, which Bultmann thinks of as difficult to establish, i.e. whether Paul and John were interested in the historical Jesus. We will then attempt to solve the problem of the relationship between the faith of Jesus and the faith in Jesus. And in chapter V, we will evaluate the works of Bultmann with the references to the questions which we have raised above.

CHAPTER II. Continuity Between the Historical Jesus and  
the Kerygmatic Christ: E.Käsemann, E.Fuchs,  
G.Ebeling

1. Introduction: Common Elements of Käsemann, Fuchs  
and Ebeling

It is widely agreed that the 'new quest' for the historical Jesus was formally opened by a lecture of Käsemann, which was entitled *The Problem of the Historical Jesus*, delivered in 1953 at a gathering of former students of Bultmann at Marburg. This issue was soon followed by a parallel proposal on the part of Fuchs,<sup>1</sup> and it has been one of main discussion points amongst the post-Bultmannians.<sup>2</sup> In the search for the historical Jesus, generally speaking, Käsemann, Fuchs and Ebeling share several similar perspectives;

Firstly, they believe that the quest of the

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<sup>1</sup>. "Die Frage nach dem Historischen Jesus", Guest lecture of the University of Zurich, on 25 May, 1956; Published in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 53, 1956, pp. 210-229.

<sup>2</sup>. Reginald H. Fuller, *The New Testament in Current Study* (London: SCM, 1963), pp. 33f. James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM, 1959), pp. 12f. Norman Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1967), pp. 226f. Although Fuller mentions that his book *The Mission and Achievement of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1954) was written shortly before Käsemann's "The Problem of the Historical Jesus", he admits that the new quest of the historical Jesus was inaugurated by an address of Käsemann and has been a main topic in the post-Bultmannians. Cf. Reginald H. Fuller, *Op.cit.*, pp. 33-38.

historical Jesus is not only theologically necessary but also theologically legitimate. They do not deny that the New Testament was written not by historical but by kerygmatic interest.<sup>3</sup> There are various kerygmatic formulations in the New Testament. However, the common element in all the variability of the kerygma is the proclamation of the one name--Jesus. The kerygma insists on the indispensable importance of the historical Jesus. "The mention of Jesus' name in the kerygma serves not only to indicate the contents of the kerygma, but also to indicate its basis....The kerygma itself names Jesus as its criterion".<sup>4</sup> Fuchs clearly expresses the necessity of the quest of the historical Jesus in saying that:

Interpretierten wir früher den historischen Jesus mit Hilfe des urchristlichen Kerygmas, so interpretieren wir heute dieses Kerygma mit Hilfe des historischen Jesus.<sup>5</sup>

They sound a warning about the danger of falling into docetism and of having faith degenerate into a mere mysticism or legalism, if there is not a real continuity between the historical Jesus and the Christ of the

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<sup>3</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London: SCM, 1964), p. 59.

<sup>4</sup>. G.Ebeling, *Theology and Proclamation* (London: Collins, 1966), p. 65. Cf. E.Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today* (London: SCM, 1969), pp. 47, 60.

<sup>5</sup>. E.Fuchs, *Zur Frage nach dem Historischen Jesus* (Tübingen: J.C.B.MOHR, 1960), in Vorrede.

kerygma.<sup>6</sup> If the kerygma is not in itself intelligible, then it must presuppose a faith which already has its basis in something other than the kerygma.<sup>7</sup> If "the Kerygma presupposes the historical Jesus"<sup>8</sup> the kerygma would become an abstract idea or a mere myth without its ground.<sup>9</sup> In this sense, "faith is manifestly not christian faith if it does not have a basis in the historical Jesus".<sup>10</sup>

They argue that the kerygma is not intelligible directly, but should be interpreted. Therefore, it is legitimate to go beyond the kerygma for the purpose of interpretation.<sup>11</sup> The rise of the kerygma was a historical phenomenon, and it is in the form of particular texts which have been handed down to us. If the attempt to go beyond the kerygma is not to find the historical facts to secure faith but to interpret it properly, Ebeling claims that "it becomes pointless to forbid the attempt to get back behind the texts, whether it be to try to get back

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<sup>6</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, p. 25. *New Testament Questions of Today*, p. 64. G.Ebeling, *Op.cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>7</sup>. G.Ebeling, *Op.cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>8</sup>. R.Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus" in *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ*, p. 18.

<sup>9</sup>. E.Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>10</sup>. G.Ebeling, *Word and Faith* (London: SCM, 1963), p. 204.

<sup>11</sup>. G.Ebeling, *Theology and Proclamation*, p. 57.

behind the Pauline kerygma to the kerygma of the primitive community, or to get back behind this to the kerygma of Jesus himself".<sup>12</sup>

Secondly, their approach to the search for the historical Jesus does not mean that they attempt to write a chronological biography of Jesus. The Synoptic Gospels are the product of a tradition which was at least forty years in process of formation. At first individual sayings and isolated stories were handed on. Later these were collected together probably for preaching purpose. They agree that the New Testament is not the work of professional historians but the record of faith.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless they do not doubt that the source material contains "Jesus' certain unmistakable traits of his individuality"<sup>14</sup> and the "faith of Jesus".<sup>15</sup> To be more precise, as far as the essential traits and the faith of Jesus are concerned, like Bultmann, they are not

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<sup>12</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, p. 59. E.Fuchs, *Studies of the Historical Jesus*, (London: SCM, 1964), pp. 84f. G.Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith*, p. 32.

<sup>14</sup>. E.Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, p. 64.

<sup>15</sup>. E.Fuchs, *Studies of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 80f. G.Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, pp. 235f.

sceptical of the sources.<sup>16</sup> They do not attribute the failure of the quest of the historical Jesus in the nineteenth century to the sources, but to the concept of history--historicism, or positivistic view of history.<sup>17</sup> They are well aware of the fact that concerning the sources there has been no great difference between the nineteenth century and the twentieth century. Accordingly they, particularly Fuchs and Ebeling, do not concentrate on finding so called historical *bruta facta*, but on a hermeneutic principle which is called as new hermeneutic. Ebeling argues;

One can scarcely maintain that the discovery of new sources or the development of new methods of study gives adequate historical grounds for this change in the course of theology. I think that it is much rather the necessity of such a search from the point of view of hermeneutics which has proved decisive. The search for the historical Jesus is a search for the hermeneutic key to Christology.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>. E.Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, pp. 46f. G.Ebeling, *Theology and Proclamation*, pp. 55f.

<sup>17</sup>. Concerning *Leben-Jesus-Forschung* in the nineteenth century Bultmann and the post-Bultmannians argue as follows: the Gospels cannot be the sources for the life of Jesus, since the Gospels were not written with objectivity. The old quest in the nineteenth century attempted to paint objective portraits of Jesus. However, the failure of the old quest was not due to the sources but to the mentality of the old quest which was influenced by historicism. This mentality made the old quest regard the Gospels as objective historical sources. Cf. R.Bultmann, *Faith and Understanding*, pp. 28-52, *Kerygma and Myth*, vol.I, pp. 12-15, G.Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith*, pp. 48f. James M.Robinson, *Op.cit.*, pp. 26-47.

<sup>18</sup>. G.Ebeling, *Theology and Proclamation*, p. 55.

Fuchs and Ebeling believe that they can trace the transition of the 'proclaimer' to the 'proclaimed' with the *help of hermeneutics*. As will be examined, they do not approach this issue historically, but by hermeneutic key, on the basis that the language of Jesus in the New Testament can contain the original decision and the faith of Jesus. In this chapter, because, like Bultmann, Käsemann, Fuchs, and Ebeling take the first type of the historical continuity for granted,<sup>19</sup> our investigation will be confined to examining how they could answer the issues which were left unexplained in Bultmann: For Käsemann we will concentrate two things. Firstly, we will look at how Käsemann demonstrates that Jesus could possess the Messianic consciousness and that his followers could recognize it before the rise of Easter faith. Though Käsemann doubts that Jesus used any Christological title explicitly in communicating with others, he believes that we can understand the Messiahship of Jesus through his 'authority' and 'spirit' which filled him in his life time, i.e. the authority and the Spirit give Jesus his uniqueness. Secondly, we will look at how much and in what manner Paul and John were interested in the historical Jesus. For Fuchs and Ebeling we will concentrate on i) how they can argue that Jesus had 'faith', and ii) why the primitive Church confessed the

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<sup>19</sup>. E.Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, p. 47f. G.Ebeling, *Theology and Proclamation*, p. 41.

faith *in* Jesus. In doing this, we will understand the relationship between the proclamation of Jesus (the faith of Jesus) and that of the Church (the faith in Jesus).



## 2. The Uniqueness of Jesus and the Historical Jesus in Paul and John

### 2.1. The Uniqueness of Jesus

Käsemann begins his enterprise with the fact that Jesus was a Jew. There is no room for doubt that Jesus took on the obligation of a devout Jew, since he hardly preached and worked beyond the borders of Israel. Jesus' going to the temple, his prayers, his familiarity with the Old Testament, and his directions on religion and moral questions well show that Jesus was a devout Jew.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, however, Jesus decisively broke the limits of the Jewish religion. Rather as a Jew, Jesus could radically overcome Judaism.<sup>21</sup> In this sense Käsemann categorises the traits of Jesus as 'at once devout and liberal'.<sup>22</sup> Käsemann argues that the uniqueness of Jesus can be sought from Jesus' liberal attitude.

Let us look at what Jesus' liberal attitude in Käsemann means from an example of the Sermon on the Mount.

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<sup>20</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom* (London: SCM, 1969), pp. 18f.

<sup>21</sup>. E.Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>22</sup>. At this point, Käsemann suggests that the 'true God and true man' can be reduced to the formula 'at once devout and liberal'. E.Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom*, p. 20.

Käsemann regards the first, second and fourth antitheses in the Sermon on the Mount as authentic. In these words, the decisive factor is that "the words ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω embody a claim to an authority which rivals and challenges that of Moses".<sup>23</sup> For Käsemann this indicates: i) Rabbis can oppose each other in debate by the use of the formula 'But I say'. But they never use this formula against the scripture and Moses. To this there are no Jewish parallels. It signifies that anyone who claims an authority rivalling and challenging Moses has *ipso facto* set himself above Moses".<sup>24</sup> In other words, Jesus felt the Messiahship before his death, at least implicitly, because "Jesus felt himself in a position to override, with an unparalleled and sovereign freedom, the words of the Torah and the authority of Moses".<sup>25</sup> ii) For the followers of Jesus it was impossible to regard Jesus as a rabbi or a prophet. "The only category which does justice to his claim (quite independently of whether he used it himself and required it of others) is that in which his disciples themselves placed him--namely, that of Messiah".<sup>26</sup> iii) Jesus' liberal attitude is closely related to his death. Jesus' liberal attitude shakes the very foundations of

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<sup>23</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, p. 37.

<sup>24</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>26</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Judaism and causes his death.<sup>27</sup> The pious people of the time were deeply incensed by Jesus' attitude towards Jewish tradition. Jesus infringed a social and political taboo, and even the prevailing moral order through his association with sinners, tax-collectors, and prostitutes. At this point, Jesus did not disclaim the Baptist's legacy when he used hard words about the rulers and powerful people of his time. This makes the cross intelligible.<sup>28</sup> Here we can argue that Käsemann rejects two tendencies; firstly, he objects to any attempt to locate the origin of Christology in two or three major Christological moments, such as the baptism, the resurrection, etc. He believes that the origin of Christology should be found in the ministry of Jesus.<sup>29</sup> Secondly, Käsemann objects to a trend crystallized in Bultmann's saying, "The great embarrassment to the attempt to reconstruct a portrait of Jesus is the fact that we cannot know how Jesus understood his end, his death".<sup>30</sup> For Käsemann, the cross is the result of Jesus' liberal attitude throughout his life.

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<sup>27</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>28</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom*, pp. 28-29. *New Testament Questions of Today*, p. 51.

<sup>29</sup>. In this regard, James P.Mackey has a similar view. Cf. "Christian Faith and Critical History: The Systematician and the Exegete", in *Critical History and Biblical Faith* (Villanova: Villanova University, 1979), pp. 59-90.

<sup>30</sup>. R.Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus", p. 23.

Therefore, Jesus' life and message could scarcely have ended differently, whether Jesus went to the cross consciously and of set purpose or not.<sup>31</sup>

Käsemann argues that Jesus' liberal attitude revealed in the sermon on the Mount is completely parallel with Jesus' attitude reflected in the view to the Sabbath commandment, the prescriptions for ceremonial purity, the conflict over the law of purification, the remarkable use of the word 'Amen'.<sup>32</sup> Jesus' liberal attitude is a consistent element in his sayings and deeds, since Jesus lived what he believed and preached.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, Jesus' followers understood Jesus' unique attitude and participated in it before Easter. Käsemann claims; if "Jesus really broke through out of Judaism, this break through also involved those who had been following him in his earthly life, even if the complete meaning of what had happened did not immediately come home to them.... To maintain that there was no such thing as the kerygma until after Easter because the eschatological self-understanding of the believer was a product of the Easter event is to deprive the following of the earthly Jesus of

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<sup>31</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom*, p. 36.

<sup>32</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, pp. 38-41.

<sup>33</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom*, p. 31.

any solid content".<sup>34</sup> For Käsemann this means what is true of Jesus must also be true of his followers. "Jesus' liberal attitude then becomes the authentic mark of right Christian doctrine, of true faith".<sup>35</sup>

If Jesus did not depend on the Jewish tradition, rather if he put himself above the authority of the Torah and Moses, we have to ask upon what was the certainty of Jesus' behaviour based. The answer comes from the saying in Matt. 12:26 that "Jesus ascribes his conquest of the demons to the Spirit of God which fills him".<sup>36</sup> Käsemann argues that "he must have regarded himself as the instrument of that living Spirit of God".<sup>37</sup> The ground of Jesus' sayings and deeds which makes him unique can be "derived solely from Jesus' consciousness of a special mission, or more precisely from the certainty that he possessed the power of the divine Spirit--a certainty that made prophetic action possible and attested the beginning of the final era in, for example, the overcoming of demons".<sup>38</sup> Therefore, Jesus' liberal attitude, which gives him his uniqueness, is due to the 'spirit' which fills

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<sup>34</sup>. E.Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>35</sup>. E.Käsemann *Jesus Means Freedom*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>36</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, p. 41.

<sup>37</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>38</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom*, p. 24.

him.

In this context, we can approach the Reign of God,<sup>39</sup> and the miracles the meanings of which are closely related to each other in Käsemann. For Käsemann if miracle is used as objective evidence to convince, the basic significance of miracle is abandoned. Miracle should not be understood as a supernatural breach of the laws of causality. In the times of the New Testament, nature and supernature, immanence and transcendence, and heaven and earth do not stand over against each other in a stark mutual exclusiveness, but are seen as continually touching, mingling and once again diverging.<sup>40</sup> Käsemann says that "once we have this clear, we can see that the concept of miracle current in the ancient world was not orientated primarily, as ours is, towards the suspension of causality but towards the occurrence of an epiphany.

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<sup>39</sup>. The phrase the 'Kingdom of God' frequently appears in Bultmann, and in the post Bultmannians. However, they use often the rule of God, the reign of God, and the *basileia* instead of the Kingdom of God. In any case these words do not mean the territory but the power or reign of God. Cf. R.Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, pp. 35f. E.Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, pp. 43f. E.Fuchs, *Studies of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 94f. G.Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith*, pp. 52f. In liberation theology and minjung theology in chapters III and IV, there is also no consistent term for the Kingdom of God. However, liberation theology and minjung theology do not regard the Kingdom of God as territory but as eschatological power of God. Therefore we will use the 'Kingdom of God' and the 'reign of God' according to their preference. But these terms always means God's rule or power in this thesis.

<sup>40</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, pp. 48, 52.

In a miracle there is an encounter with the divinity and its power".<sup>41</sup> The evangelists do not leave the miracles as isolated happenings in the realm of the merely contingent. Paul and John object to the use of the miracles as objective proofs of the faith.<sup>42</sup> Rather, the miracles of the New Testament show that "Jesus is the cosmic victor over death and the devil. He is in the strength of the divine Spirit that fills him".<sup>43</sup> What Jesus actually did in the miracles is regarded in such a way as to characterize it as the saving event for the whole world: "The fact that the power of death, which is another manifestation of satanic rule, is broken is constantly being proclaimed in healing miracles".<sup>44</sup> Therefore, it is not the magical deed, but the Spirit of Jesus which we encounter in the miracles. Those who experience the Spirit in the miracles feel that the Reign of God has dawned out of earthly distress and satanic toils.<sup>45</sup> In this manner, Käsemann relates the Reign of God to the miracles. Jesus proclaims the Reign of God not in the same way as the prophets in their message, rather, in the mode of the Baptist or Qumran. "But Jesus combines his

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<sup>41</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>42</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>43</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom*, p. 57.

<sup>44</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup>. *Ibid.*



call to decision with healing and exorcisms in a way which distinguishes him from the Baptist or the Teacher of Righteousness in Qumran".<sup>46</sup> Käsemann claims that Jesus believed that in his words the Reign of God came to his hearers.<sup>47</sup> Jesus' proclamation of the Reign of God sets men in its presence and makes them face a decision. "The sole content of the call is that we should accept and hold fast the promise of the God who is at hand".<sup>48</sup> 'We are now being called to the Reign of God' and 'we have to accept it' indicates that "we can, may and must live without anxiety and be assured of God's loving care".<sup>49</sup> This means salvation to human beings. Jesus' words and works are signs that salvation is present.<sup>50</sup> It was by the

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<sup>46</sup>. E.Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, p. 122.

<sup>47</sup>. It does not mean that Käsemann argues for 'realized eschatology'. On the one hand, Käsemann, Fuchs and Ebeling lay stress on the present element concerning the Reign of God. On the other hand, they speak of present and future elements together in the teaching of Jesus. But in any case, their reference is *not temporal but existential*. Fuchs argues that Jesus himself is not concerned with chronological history or world history but with man himself as the essential content of history. E.Fuchs, *Zur Frage Nach Dem Historischen Jesus*, pp. 68ff. Cf. E.Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, pp. 43-44. G.Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith*, pp. 52f. Norman Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 121-124. Therefore, it would be pointless to classify their understanding of the Reign of God into a certain category, such as 'realized', 'consequent' or 'proleptic eschatology'.

<sup>48</sup>. E.Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, p. 122.

<sup>49</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, p. 41.

<sup>50</sup>. E.Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, p.



power of the Spirit that "Jesus cured those possessed by evil spirits, that he appealed to his mighty works as evidence of the dawning of God's reign, and that he therefore regarded himself as the bearer of the miracle-working Spirit".<sup>51</sup>

## 2.2. The Historical Jesus in Paul and John

Paul, however, was not interested only in the mere historical fact that Jesus came into the world.<sup>52</sup> The Old Testament laid the man who died on the cross under a curse, declaring him to be unclean and outside the divine covenant. However, Paul consistently talks about the 'cross' and the one who was crucified instead of merely the death of Jesus. Long before Paul, the tradition emphasized the death of Jesus as a saving event. Paul takes this over and deepens it.<sup>53</sup> By mentioning a scandal of the cross intentionally, this is what I Cor. 1:23 means by stumbling block to the Jews and folly to the Gentiles,<sup>54</sup> Paul gives his whole attention to *the unique element of*

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<sup>51</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom*, p. 19.

<sup>52</sup>. E.Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, p. 48.

<sup>53</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul* (London: SCM, 1971), pp. 36, 45.

<sup>54</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

*Jesus* which was consistent throughout his life and caused the cross. Therefore, according to I Cor. 1:23; 2:2, Paul says that he wants to preach and knows only the one who was crucified. The centre of Pauline theology is fixed here.<sup>55</sup> "Paul emphasizes that the core of his doctrine of the resurrection is one aspect of the message of the cross, not that the cross is simply one chapter in a book of resurrection dogmatics".<sup>56</sup>

Käsemann, therefore, claims that the "christian existence thrives only under the cross".<sup>57</sup> 'Under the cross' indicates that we have to share the way of Jesus to the cross. Käsemann says that "we cannot share in Christ's glory except by bearing his cross after him on earth".<sup>58</sup> At the same time, 'under the cross' means *with the Spirit* which fills Jesus and gives him his uniqueness. For Paul the Spirit does not mean spiritual gifts. Paul interprets the Spirit by his preaching of the cross of Jesus.<sup>59</sup> "In so doing Paul calls men into the shadow of the earthly Jesus".<sup>60</sup> In this sense, like Jesus, "Christians

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<sup>55</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>56</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom*, p. 68.

<sup>57</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 71. Underline added.

<sup>58</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup>. E.Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, p. 48.

<sup>60</sup>. *Ibid.*

are bearers of the Spirit".<sup>61</sup> Käsemann argues that "Paul recognized no bearer of the Spirit who did not bear on his body the marks of the Lord Jesus".<sup>62</sup> Here we can assume that the consistent and unique element in the life and death of Jesus is the Spirit. In Pauline theology, the Spirit corresponds to the 'spirit' which filled Jesus.

In the same way, Paul does not replace the historical Jesus with the exalted Christ. In Paul the exalted Christ is identical with Jesus. For Paul the resurrection is one way of preaching the cross of Jesus. Paul "proclaims the ascension as a pure article of faith, without any narrative accompaniment at all".<sup>63</sup> Käsemann claims;

It cannot be doubted the Christ of Phil. 2:5ff., in and despite all the luxuriant mythology of the hymn, was for Paul no mere symbol which, on better acquaintance with Greek mythology, could then be replaced by Hercules or, in all essentials, equated with Hercules; he was the Jesus whose place no man can take.<sup>64</sup>

For Paul the Christ of the kerygma is identical with the historical Jesus, since in Paul "Christ is the Jesus

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<sup>61</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom*, p. 70.

<sup>62</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>63</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul*, p. 49.

<sup>64</sup>. E.Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, p. 48.

who speaks in the historical tradition"<sup>65</sup> Therefore, for the believers, both before and after Easter, Jesus reveals himself as the Lord.

To begin with the intention of the writer of the fourth Gospel is a good way to understand how much the historical Jesus influenced the Gospel of John. According to Käsemann, John lived at the end of the first century not too far from Palestine, possibly in Syria. John probably did not know the Synoptics themselves, but rather the traditions of which purer and more original forms are preserved in the Synoptics.<sup>66</sup> John, however, is too independent and too critical to accept such a heritage without modifications, since John knows that salvation cannot be based upon the tradition, rather "tradition calls attention to Jesus".<sup>67</sup> It does not mean that John holds contempt for tradition, nor does he contrast the tradition with the Spirit.<sup>68</sup> Rather, John tries to select a genuine tradition with a certain criterion. For John "the sole qualification of genuine tradition is that the

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<sup>65</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>66</sup>. E. Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17* (London: SCM, 1968), p. 36.

<sup>67</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>68</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 36f.

voice of Jesus is contained in it".<sup>69</sup> In other words, "in radical reduction John made Jesus and his witness into the sole content and criterion of the true tradition".<sup>70</sup> The remarkable thing is that "John, however, identified the Spirit with the voice of Jesus which in the form of the Paraclete continues to speak from heaven to the disciples when he himself is no longer with them."<sup>71</sup> On the other hand, John interprets the Spirit by reference to the Word. In this case, the Word signifies a genuine tradition which contains the voice of the earthly Jesus. This *Word* is not the gift of the Spirit. This Word is "the actualization of a clearly-defined tradition which, as such, is not validated by the Church, as we have supposed, but as the word of Jesus, is evidently distinct from all other church tradition".<sup>72</sup> To this end John puts the 'voice of Jesus' into the mouth of Jesus as he goes about on earth, and cast it in the form of a Gospel. The whole process of the formation of the fourth Gospel can be summarized in one sentence that; "the Gospel of John treats of the abiding presence of the exalted Lord precisely within the

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<sup>69</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 38. Underline added. In the same way, Käsemann argues, John does not regard the Church as the institution of salvation. For John, the Church is basically and exclusively the fellowship of people who hear Jesus' word (voice). *Ibid.*, pp. 40-44.

<sup>70</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>71</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup>. E.Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, pp. 48-49.

framework of a history of the earthly Jesus".<sup>73</sup> Käsemann calls this process as the historicizing design of John.<sup>74</sup>

The principal criterion of the Christian message is the voice of Jesus--the Spirit. "In John, the Spirit is nothing else but the continual possibility and reality of the new encounter with Jesus in the post-Easter situation".<sup>75</sup> Therefore, in the Gospel of John, we meet not the kerygmatic Christ, but the Spirit as the voice of Jesus which 'remains' in the tradition. Käsemann says that faith means one thing only--to know who Jesus is.<sup>76</sup> "The mark of true faith, according to John, is that a man has himself seen and heard Jesus and is following him".<sup>77</sup> Käsemann argues that "the reason why the individual believer is not in danger of losing himself to a philosophical world-view of a religious tradition or a Church dogmatics lies in the fact that his salvation is based on Jesus alone".<sup>78</sup> We can conclude the work of Käsemann in saying that "in the encounter with the earthly Jesus and in the Post-Easter proclamation, the

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<sup>73</sup>. E.Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, p. 31.

<sup>74</sup>. E.Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, p. 49.

<sup>75</sup>. E.Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>76</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>77</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>78</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

object and content of faith remain identical".<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

### 3. The Faith of Jesus

#### 3.1. Standard of Faith.

When Fuchs approaches the quest of the historical Jesus, he introduces the term 'conduct'. Of course, Fuchs takes a serious view of the words of Jesus. However, in some cases a certain situation gives us a good clue to understand Jesus, if this situation contains Jesus' action. Fuchs argues, for example, that the situations reflected in the community debates and discussions preserved in the Gospels might well cast doubt on the genuineness of a particular saying; but they might equally cast light on Jesus' conduct. "For actions are more likely to stimulate imitation than words".<sup>80</sup> According to Fuchs, the meals with the sinners and the publicans show Jesus' conduct as a whole. Through the meals Jesus celebrated the Reign of God which was present there.<sup>81</sup> Fuchs gives particular meaning to this conduct of Jesus, which brought upon him severe accusation from the strict Jew, and eventually even death on the cross<sup>82</sup>;

This conduct is neither that of a prophet nor of a teacher of wisdom, but that of a man who dares to act

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<sup>80</sup>. E.Fuchs, *Studies of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 22.

<sup>81</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>82</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 36.



in God's stead, and who, it must always be remembered, draws to himself sinners who, but for him, would have to flee from God.<sup>83</sup>

On the basis of the conduct of Jesus, Fuchs comes to Jesus' message, since Fuchs believes that "Jesus' conduct was itself the real framework of his proclamation".<sup>84</sup> For Fuchs the starting-point of Jesus' proclamation in the Synoptics is Jesus' authority to gather a people for God under the banner of the Reign of God.<sup>85</sup> What is peculiar to Jesus in his attitude to the recipients is not that he addresses them radically as penitents. By contrast with the Qumran sects, Jesus designates them and deals with them as those who are unable to help themselves.<sup>86</sup> Jesus does not start from the idea of the Reign of God. Unlike the Baptist, Jesus shows what the Reign of God is by eating and drinking with his hearers who thus participate in it. Fuchs argues that the Reign of God comes to the person who believes in its coming, who directs to its coming all the faith he can muster. The Reign of God comes to us, 'when' we believe its coming.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>84</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>85</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>86</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>87</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 95. Fuchs's understanding of the Reign of God from the parables of Jesus is as follows:  
\* *The treasure in the field* (Matt. 13:44) and *the*

There is a very interesting argument in Fuchs:

The central theme of the sayings of Jesus is the decision which they demand. But this demand is simply the echo of Jesus' own decision.<sup>88</sup>

This quotation means that the core of Jesus' message is a demanding decision. *At the same time*, however, this demand is the echo of Jesus' own decision. We can ask, i) does it mean that Jesus is one of the hearers of his own message, or ii) does Jesus' message contain the decision of Jesus? In Fuchs the answer for both should be 'yes'. We will deal with the second question in examining the hermeneutic of Fuchs and Ebeling. Here we will look at how Jesus can be one of the hearers of his own

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*similitude of the pearl* (Matt. 13:45f)--the point is not a call to preparedness to sacrifice but a challenge to accept with joy what God has done for man. *Ibid.*, pp. 94f, 123-127.

\* *The saying about the ravens* (Lk. 12:24 par, Matt. 6:26)-- God's working is related to the present: Faith is demanded for this. *Ibid.*, pp. 105f.

\* *The warning about timely settlement* (Lk. 12:57-59 par. Matt. 5:25f)--our relation to the future is decided in the present. What is therefore demanded is correct dealings with the gift of the given time. This time is the concrete present. *Ibid.*, pp. 110f.

\* *The parable of the sower* (Mk. 4:13-20 par, Matt. 13:18-23, Lk. 8:11-15) and the *similitude of the mustard seed* (Matt. 13:31f par. Mk. 4:30-32, Lk. 13:18f)-- the main issue is an either-or. *Ibid.*, pp. 90f, 126f, 130.

\* *The parable of the prodigal sons* (Lk. 15:11-32)--the point is the forgiveness of sins. *Ibid.*, pp. 160f.

<sup>88</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

proclamation. For Fuchs Jesus did not differentiate him from his hearers, rather he included himself with his hearers. When Jesus proclaims the Reign of God, and when Jesus celebrates the Reign of God with his hearers, "he does this by including himself with them".<sup>89</sup> In other words, Jesus has provided for his word by surrendering himself completely to his word. The word of Jesus and his person become inseparable through Jesus' surrendering himself to his word. Fuchs argues that if the proclamation of the 'demand' is a question, 'faith' is response.<sup>90</sup> When the proclamation of Jesus (demanding decision) is effected, 'to accept it' (making decision) is response. In this sense, decision corresponds to faith. Therefore, Fuchs claims that "Jesus' own faith is all the more important".<sup>91</sup> We can understand the faith of Jesus by the sayings and deeds of Jesus--in Fuchs's term--by the conduct of Jesus. Jesus' conduct is Jesus' own expression of his faith.<sup>92</sup> We have seen what Jesus' conduct means through Jesus' association with sinners and his proclamation of the Reign of God. Therefore, we can say: faith occurs, when we are forced to decide, in accepting with joy what God has done for us. It is a gift which is

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<sup>89</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>90</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>91</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>92</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

being offered through Jesus by God. This gift is the forgiveness of sins.<sup>93</sup> Fuchs argues: "the faith of Jesus was not a faith in some kind of imminent expectation.... Rather it was, for example, faith in the forgiveness of sins, in the working of the Reign of God already in the present as it was celebrated by Jesus with his disciples and other persons also at meals".<sup>94</sup>

The understanding of the resurrection of Jesus is necessary to grasp the meaning of 'faith in Jesus'. Fuchs begins with Paul, for he believes that "our primary source is the literary legacy of the Apostle Paul".<sup>95</sup> According to Fuchs, Paul had certainly never met the historical Jesus in the flesh (cf. I Cor. 2:2 with II Cor. 5:16). However, Paul himself writes about seeing Jesus on one occasion (I Cor. 9:1) which is of special significance for us: 'have I not seen Jesus our Lord?'<sup>96</sup> Fuchs interprets

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<sup>93</sup>. Cf. footnote 87 in this chapter.

<sup>94</sup>. E.Fuchs, "The New Testament and the Hermeneutical Problem" in *The New Hermeneutic* (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, 1964), eds. James M. Robinson, John B. Cobb, JR, p. 120. Italics deleted.

<sup>95</sup>. E.Fuchs, *Studies of the Historical Jesus*, p. 14. For Fuchs there are two reasons why Paul can be good source to understand the resurrection of Jesus: i) Paul is the earlier source, the Gospels are at least twenty years later than Paul. ii) The traditions, which are used in the Gospels, remain anonymous. While, we have in Paul a witness who is responsible for his own assertions. *Ibid.*, pp. 14f.

<sup>96</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

this phrase that i) Paul had experienced a vision or appearance of Jesus. ii) It was not absolutely necessary for an apostle to have previously known Jesus personally.<sup>97</sup> In Paul, however, the important point is that;

Paul never demanded of his hearers that they like him must have a vision of Christ. It was enough that each should learn to accept Jesus as Lord (cf. Rom. 8:4ff). ... The object of Paul's missionary activity was to enable his hearers to participate in the same self-understanding that had been disclosed to him when he confessed Jesus as Lord.<sup>98</sup>

For Fuchs, 'to accept Jesus as Lord' means to have self-understanding, as in the above quotation. Here self-understanding signifies faith and salvation.<sup>99</sup> Fuchs summarizes the sole aim of Paul's activity in a single sentence from the New Testament: If you confess and (thus) believe from the heart, *ὁμολογῇ* then you shall be saved (jussive).<sup>100</sup> Therefore, the core of Paul's activity is to proclaim and demand his hearers to participate in 'salvation'. "This salvation means salvation from God's judgement".<sup>101</sup> For Paul life really means the joy which can unite an individual with God, and death means the

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<sup>97</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 15f.

<sup>98</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>99</sup>. In this context, Fuchs argues, "it is nevertheless true that the sinner really has no self-understanding--Rom. 7:24 is interpretation". *Ibid.*, p. 17 footnote 1.

<sup>100</sup>. *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>101</sup>. *Ibid.*

anxiety that must separate a man from God.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, those who believe in Jesus as Lord are free to experience such joy, and free from such anxiety. The essential element of Easter faith is faith in forgiveness which is expressed in a parable of Jesus.<sup>103</sup> Here Fuchs argues the meaning of 'faith in Jesus': "according to Paul, faith in Jesus manifestly leads to the paradoxical truth that in the very God from whom man once fled or had to flee he has found a refuge which he now loves".<sup>104</sup> In other words, as Jesus proclaimed the revelation (will of God), Paul and the Church in their proclamation of Jesus proclaimed not the person of Jesus but exactly the same revelation of God acted in Jesus. This does not mean that the Church did not proclaim the person of Jesus. This means that the significance of the proclamation of the Church underlying her confession of faith in Jesus indicates the acts of God. The following quotation helps us to clarify the point:

This means, however, that the Church's proclamation derives not from a confession [in Jesus] but from the *revelation* of God, for its content is Jesus himself.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup>. E.Fuchs, "The New Testament and the Hermeneutical Problem", p. 120.

<sup>104</sup>. E.Fuchs, *Studies of Historical Jesus*, p. 18.

<sup>105</sup>. E.Fuchs, "The Task of New Testament Scholarship for the Church's Proclamation Today", in *Christianity Divided: Protestant and Roman Catholic Theological Issues* (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1962), eds.

Fuchs distinguishes cause from effect concerning the formulations of confession. The formulations of the Church are the effect, which certainly proclaims the person of Jesus. "But the effect thus permits us to think back upon the cause, upon Jesus himself, as the word of God, in that we seek to retranslate for ourselves the texts which speaks of the cause".<sup>106</sup> For Fuchs the cause is revelation of God which was acted in and responded by Jesus. The confession of Jesus was produced in a new response of the Church to the revelation of God. The revelation of God means the new self-understanding that "God *has* already corrected the most terrible consequence of sin, the compulsion to believe in ourselves".<sup>107</sup> This again means salvation for human beings, in which Paul demands his hearers to participate. Finally, Fuchs explains the meaning of faith in Jesus today. Jesus surrendered himself completely to his words unto death. Fuchs argues: "this should not be confused with the situation of martyrdom, which is close at hand in the Synoptic Gospels. In spite of Mark 8.34-37, and in view of Mark 8.38 and parallels, *self-surrender* is *not* the

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D.J.Callahan, H.A.Obermann, D.J.O'Hanlon, S.J. p. 81.

<sup>106</sup>. E.Fuchs "Must One Believe in Jesus if He Wants to Believe in God?", in *Journal for Theology and the Church*, vol.I, 1964, p. 162.

<sup>107</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 164.

category of the believer or of faith, but simply and exclusively the category of Jesus".<sup>108</sup> By his obedience unto the death, Jesus himself becomes the standard of faith.<sup>109</sup> Therefore, "those who believe in Jesus do not surrender faith to their own experiences, no matter how extraordinary these may be, but look at Jesus' conduct".<sup>110</sup> Fuchs concludes: "To have faith in Jesus now means essentially to repeat Jesus' decision".<sup>111</sup> "To believe in Jesus means to believe like Jesus".<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup>. E.Fuchs, *Studies of Historical Jesus*, p. 157.

<sup>109</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 80.

<sup>110</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>111</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>112</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 63.



### 3.2. The Ground of Faith

3.2.1. Ebeling wrestles with the transition from the historical Jesus to faith in Jesus. For Ebeling the bridge between them comes from correct understanding of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

According to Ebeling the New Testament references to the resurrection of Jesus can be classified into three main groups. The first is the Easter stories which are found in the closing chapters of the four Gospels. The second is composed of the formulas of proclamation or confession. The third is a single text, I Corinthians 15:3-8. The first group contains a great deal of concrete and individual details. It is difficult to harmonize them, since none of the accounts in the Easter stories can be identified with another. Ebeling regards the Easter stories as the products of pious imagination. The second group consists of brief formulas having the character of testimony. There are no concrete details at all in this material. For Ebeling these formulas are variations of the pure assertion of the resurrection of Jesus. Lastly, I Corinthians 15:3ff is very early text and of unquestioned authenticity. However, in this text, there is nothing about the event of the resurrection itself. Considering the fact that this text has not a piece of

historical information, it nearly belongs to the second group.<sup>113</sup>

Under the assumption of the fact that all three groups do not contain historical statement, Ebeling comes to analyze the tradition of the Easter accounts. There are two types of stories found in juxtaposition: stories of the empty tomb, and stories of appearance. Ebeling argues that "the stories of the tomb testify to the Resurrection in a certain negative way, proceeding from the discovery that the tomb was empty. These stories were originally told only of the women who followed Jesus, not of the disciples. In these stories there was no appearance of Christ, but only angelic appearance".<sup>114</sup> Because Ebeling considers that the rest of the tradition, including the Pauline, is silent about the empty tomb, and that the accounts of the empty tomb are later additions, he does not pay attention to the stories of the tomb.<sup>115</sup> Ebeling claims that "there is no doubt that the early tradition of the Easter event consists of accounts of the appearances".<sup>116</sup>

Ebeling finds a common element from the appearances of the Risen One: the 'appearances' occurred not to

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<sup>113</sup>. G.Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith*, pp. 63-66.

<sup>114</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>115</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>116</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

neutral witnesses but to believers. "More accurately, one must say that they occurred only to those who became believers in this event".<sup>117</sup> Ebeling argues that "this does not indicate the defects but rather the essence of the event; for the point of the appearances is precisely the arising of faith in the Risen One".<sup>118</sup> In other words, the Risen One did not show himself to everyone; he did not become an object of neutral observation. Rather, those to whom the appearances occurred became believers. Therefore, the unique thing in the stories of the appearances is that the 'appearances' have the character of a *call*. In this sense, Ebeling claims that "he appeared as what he really was, namely, the witness of faith".<sup>119</sup> Ebeling asserts the significance of the resurrection of Jesus:

The decisive thing in all the encounters was that men were approached and overwhelmed and claimed by Jesus. Against all their natural attitudes and reactions, those who encountered him were awakened by him to faith, and called to follow him as the first witness of faith.<sup>120</sup>

As we have seen, Ebeling, from stories of appearances, identifies the Risen One with Jesus, and the

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<sup>117</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>118</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>120</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

appearances with the rise of faith. To understand how Ebeling can identify them, let us begin with Ebeling's conception of faith. First of all Ebeling attempts to find the relationship between Jesus and faith. He concentrates on the term 'faith' in the Synoptics. On the basis of Nestle's text, he counts eighty seven passages in all which contain the word faith, and sixty six of them in direct speech by Jesus. Ebeling excludes from his investigation those passages which are parallel to late Judaism or to the early Church, i.e. those which are used in the sense of 'faithful',<sup>121</sup> 'trust' (Lk. 16:11), 'faithfulness' (Matt. 23:23), 'warning against eschatological credulity' (Mk. 13:21; Matt. 24:23,26), or in the context of the 'question of authority' (Matt. 21:25, 32; Mk. 11:31; Lk. 20:5), etc.<sup>122</sup> However, some passages are left as authentic. Ebeling attributes the 'faith' that moves mountains (Matt. 17:20) and the 'faith'

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<sup>121</sup>. For example; the parable of the unjust steward (Lk. 16:10, 11, 12), the parable of the talent (Matt. 25:21, 23; Lk. 19:17), the parable of the faithful and wise servant (Matt. 24:25; Lk. 12:42).

<sup>122</sup>. G.Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, pp. 224 ff.

in nine healing stories to Jesus.<sup>123</sup> Ebeling acknowledges that there is no explicit saying of Jesus about his own faith. However, "it is surely impossible, in view of the manner in which Jesus speaks of faith, to except him from faith himself".<sup>124</sup> i.e. Jesus includes himself along with the other in a 'we' and in the same kind of statement. For this Ebeling could not suggest concretely the New Testament passages, which show that Jesus includes himself with others as 'we'. But the point of Ebeling's argument is that he who is able to speak so concretely of faith is obviously able to do more than merely speak of faith, namely, 'to awaken faith', 'to summon to faith'.<sup>125</sup> Ebeling expresses the relationship between Jesus and faith as two entities inseparable from each other:

Wherever faith is spoken of here, Jesus has part in that faith, and faith cannot be separated from him. In all the healing stories faith, even without its being explicitly said so (as it is in the exceptional case of Matt. 9:28), is faith in the power of Jesus. At the same time, however, it is faith that relates to Jesus only because it is faith awakened by Jesus

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<sup>123</sup>. These are nine healing stories; the Story of Paralytic (Matt. 9:2 par), the Story of the Woman with the Issue (Matt. 9:22 par), the Healing of Bartimaeus (Mk. 10:52 par), the Healing of Two Blind Men (Matt. 9:27,28), the Story of Jairus' Daughter (Matt. 9:23-26 par), the Pericope on the Healing of the Epileptic (Matt. 17:12-21 par), the pericope on the Nobleman of Capernaum (Matt. 8:5-13 par), the Story of the Syro-phoenician Woman (Matt. 15:21-28 par), the Healing of the Ten Lepers (Lk. 17:11-19). Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 227-232.

<sup>124</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>125</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 235.

himself!<sup>126</sup>

For Ebeling the basic elements in the parables of Jesus concerning the reign of God are joy, freedom and lack of anxiety.<sup>127</sup> These elements point to two things; i) these are expression of Jesus' own certainty of God. Concerning the Reign of God the emphasis should be put not on a spectacular apocalyptic happening, but on the nearness of God himself. ii) These elements are the interpretation of one thing--the 'call to faith'.<sup>128</sup> Ebeling argues; "His message, his influence, his way, his whole life was a *witness of faith* which aimed at

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<sup>126</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup>. Ebeling picks out these elements from 'Reign of God' sayings. Cf. G.Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith*, pp. 52-56. Some scholars criticize Fuchs and Ebeling on the point that the 'terminology' employed by them is too reminiscent of the psychological orientation at the end of the nineteenth century. The 'terminology' here means that Fuchs and Ebeling use the words *joy, anxiety, Jesus' certainty, surrender, assurance*, etc. Cf. J.M.Robinson, "The Formal Structure of Jesus' Message" in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation* (London: SCM, 1962), eds. W.Klassen and G.F.Snyder, pp. 91f. V.A.Harvey, *Op.cit.*, p. 177. It is hard to argue this kind of view in a short statement. However, we point out just one thing: Harvey also criticizes Bultmann, who carefully avoids the so-called *psychological* approach, by alleging that the demand of Jesus has no 'content'. He argues, "In liberal theology and in orthodoxy, the picture of Jesus' life gave some content to such things as self-surrender, obedience, love and faith. In Bultmann's theology the act of revelation is contentless". *Ibid.*, pp. 143-144. Therefore it is difficult to understand what Harvey expects when he criticizes the psychological terms on the one hand, and the contentlessness of Jesus' demand on the other.

<sup>128</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

summoning faith and at awakening faith. Even his death, his death above all, is part of this witness to faith. Jesus so devoted himself to his mission that his death was the extreme fulfilment of the witness of faith, and thus the summary of his life".<sup>129</sup>

According to Ebeling 'Amen' is undoubtedly a case of a peculiarity of Jesus' manner of speaking. There are several differences between the use of Amen of the Old Testament and Judaism and that of Jesus. Firstly, 'Amen' always stands in corroboration at the end of the statement to which it refers, while Jesus prefaces his words with an Amen.<sup>130</sup> Secondly, Amen is always spoken by someone else in response to the statement, never by the speaker himself. It means that someone assents to the words of another as valid and true.<sup>131</sup> Jesus does not depend on the response of someone else. Unlike a rabbi or a prophet, Jesus even does not rely on the authority of Moses or the Torah. Jesus himself speaks of 'Amen' before his statement.<sup>132</sup> We can summarize Ebeling's interpretation of Jesus' use of 'Amen' as follows; i) Jesus understood

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<sup>129</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>130</sup>. Recent study in the New Testament can have different view that 'Amen' as an introduction is attested in Judaism, though it is very rare. Cf. Graham N. Stanton, *The Gospels and Jesus* (Oxford: University Press, 1990), p. 181.

<sup>131</sup>. G.Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, p. 236.

<sup>132</sup>. G.Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith*, pp. 55f.

his statements, and wished to have them understood, as statements made before God, in which God himself was the Guarantor of what was said. ii) Jesus identified himself entirely with his words, and in the identification with these words he completely surrendered himself to God.<sup>133</sup> By surrendering himself to God as a witness to faith, Jesus has become the ground and source of faith. The ground of faith is not a support which relieves us in part of the need for faith.<sup>134</sup> The ground of faith does not mean that Jesus is our object of faith. Rather, it means that the communication of faith takes place solely out of the certainty of Jesus.<sup>135</sup> The ground of faith is that which "lets faith be faith, which keeps it being faith, on which faith, that is to say, ultimately relies".<sup>136</sup>

The unity of Jesus with faith comes properly to expression not really in what Jesus says of his own faith, but as a witness to faith. Because the encounter with Jesus coincides entirely with the encounter with the 'witness to faith', although Jesus belongs to the past historically, what came to expression in Jesus (faith) continues to come to expression.<sup>137</sup> Faith comes into being

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<sup>133</sup>. G.Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, pp. 236-237.

<sup>134</sup>. G.Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith*, pp. 70f.

<sup>135</sup>. G.Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, p. 238.

<sup>136</sup>. G.Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>137</sup>. G.Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, pp. 297-298.



as the consequence of the 'witness to faith'. The early Church understood it in the form of 'Jesus is risen' or 'faith in Jesus'.<sup>138</sup> For faith cannot be imitated or repeated. Faith is ventured on its own responsibility. For the early church 'faith in Jesus' means to have to do with Jesus and to enter upon his way, and to participate in him and his way. This signifies to share the innermost motive of the way of Jesus, namely, sharing Jesus' certainty of God, i.e. to enter into relations with God in view of Jesus.<sup>139</sup> Therefore, the point of the Easter event is that Jesus as the witness to faith became the ground of faith, and that those who believe are witness to faith as witness to Jesus.<sup>140</sup> Ebeling concludes; "The faith of the days after Easter knows itself to be nothing else but the right understanding of the Jesus of the day before Easter. For Jesus appeared as what he really was, as the witness to faith".<sup>141</sup>

3.2.2. Fuchs and Ebeling concentrate on the hermeneutic task to bridge the gulf between the historical text and its meaning today. The new hermeneutic grows out of the necessity to establish a continuity between the

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<sup>138</sup>. G.Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith*, p. 60.

<sup>139</sup>. G.Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, p. 302. *The Nature of Faith*, pp. 71, 74.

<sup>140</sup>. G.Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, p. 301.

<sup>141</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 302.

historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ. They bring to this exploration the concept of faith as 'language-event'.<sup>142</sup> For Fuchs and Ebeling language or word, has two particular features:

Firstly, Fuchs and Ebeling are concerned with language not in the sense of linguistics but in the relation to existence.<sup>143</sup> "What matters most is not that something is defined but that it enters the sphere of existing".<sup>144</sup> This means that, for example, 'love' becomes an event only through entering language. In relation to being, language has special function; language *justifies* being. Fuchs can illustrate this by pointing out that it is not that one is first a brother and then automatically calls the other brother. Rather the other becomes brother by my naming him brother. Therefore, through my calling him brother I certainly do not make him into one, but I admit him as a brother among us by myself entering this community with him. Fuchs describes this function of language, which justifies being by permitting being to be 'present' in time, as 'permission' (*Erlaubnis*).<sup>145</sup> In this sense,

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<sup>142</sup>. Because, concerning the hermeneutic principle, the understanding of Fuchs is almost the same as that of Ebeling, we will deal with them together. Fuchs prefers the term 'language-event' (*Sprachereignis*), and Ebeling uses 'word-event' (*Wortgeschehen*).

<sup>143</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 41 footnote 1.

<sup>144</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup>. E.Fuchs, *Studies of the Historical Jesus*, pp. 207-209.

'being' enters into living communication when it is expressed by a concrete word. So Fuchs can argue that being emerges from language: "Das Sein entspringt der Sprache, wenn uns die Sprache in den unser Leben bestimmenden Raum unser Existenz einweist".<sup>146</sup> Language can also be termed as 'assembling function' of being. "Language assumes the essential characteristic of being--that is, that it gathers together. This requires language, in order to be".<sup>147</sup> Therefore, a word can contain essential trait of being. This means, for instance, that when we are met with love, the love, as being, comes in the word and into language, and it remains there.<sup>148</sup> While, in his interpretation of history, Bultmann rejects history as reconstruction of the past, and suggests pre-understanding and life-relationship as hermeneutical principles. Fuchs and Ebeling agree that it is not a proper question regarding the past to ask, 'what happened?', 'what were the facts?', or 'How are they to be explained?'. But instead of hermeneutical principles proposed by Bultmann, Fuchs and Ebeling develop a new hermeneutical key which seeks *what came to expression* as word-event in history. In this context, when they apply

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<sup>146</sup>. E.Fuchs, *Zum Hermeneutischen Problem in der Theologie* (Tübingen: J.C.B.Mohr, 1959), *Gesammelte Aufsätze I*, p, 115.

<sup>147</sup>. E.Fuchs, *Studies of the Historical Jesus*, p. 208.

<sup>148</sup>. E.Fuchs, "Response to the American Discussion", p. 241.

the hermeneutical key to the history of Jesus, they are not interested in a biographical account of the life of Jesus. They seek what came to expression as word-event in Jesus. They argue that faith came to expression in Jesus.<sup>149</sup> On the other hand, as we have seen, Jesus surrendered himself completely to his word unto the death. Therefore, Jesus' words cannot be separated from his person. For Fuchs and Ebeling this means that the words of Jesus can contain the essential trait of Jesus, i.e. like love, for example, the decision of Jesus (the essential trait) as 'being' remains in the word of Jesus. Therefore, we could say that in the word of Jesus faith is manifest as a language-event, and that this word contains the traits of Jesus.

Secondly, language does not create something new, rather it announces what it is *time* for.<sup>150</sup> "What is distinctive about language is not the content of the individual words, not the thought or the designation, but rather its use, its application, its concentration upon the time and thus upon the distinction of times".<sup>151</sup> Therefore, as far as the historical Jesus is concerned in

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<sup>149</sup>. G.Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, pp. 295f.

<sup>150</sup>. Fuchs takes an example from the language of the family in daily life. When a mother says to her children 'get up', 'play', or 'come', they mean that they are the announcements of time, i.e. 'it is time' to get up, to play or to come. E.Fuchs, "The New Testament and Hermeneutical Problem", pp. 124f.

<sup>151</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

this matter, "Jesus' preaching is exactly like his conduct, his whole appearance; it is quite simply *the announcement of the time itself*, the *new time* of the Reign of God".<sup>152</sup> In this sense, in Ebeling's term, the Reign of God means the 'Time of God'.<sup>153</sup> When the Time of God is proclaimed, "we are asked to *hear* what time it is, what hour has struck".<sup>154</sup> Thus when 'language' is addressed to someone, it is always related to the present in justifying being.

With the first and second features of language are taken together, the word takes precedence over the text. Jesus made faith into the word in the form of the parables and in other ways--'language-event'.<sup>155</sup> The word, in the strict sense the word-event, has been handed down in the form of particular texts. In the New Testament there is a way or path of language which leads from Jesus' word to confession of Jesus. On this path of language one meets with the historical Jesus and his faith, i.e. today we meet Jesus as word in which his faith is contained.<sup>156</sup> The

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<sup>152</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129.

<sup>153</sup>. G.Ebeling, *The Lord's Prayer in Today's Word* (London: SCM, 1966), pp. 70f.

<sup>154</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>155</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 168, 199.

<sup>156</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 169. On the other hand, in Fuchs and Ebeling, language is closely related to mutual communication. 'Jesus meets us as word' presupposes 'if we respond to it'. This means that if we reject the word, it is a dead word. However, when we respond and accept it, we meet not the word about Jesus, but Jesus himself. Let

continuity between the historical Jesus and the kerygma is this: in the word of Jesus faith as a language event was manifest, and today faith is also manifest as word-event in the kerygma which remains in the form of texts to us. Fuchs concludes that "when Jesus himself was proclaimed, this procedure could, as in the case of Paul, certainly bring again into language the event which had already entered language in Jesus' sayings".<sup>157</sup>

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us take an example from Ebeling: When we hear good news of joy, if we respond and accept it, we experience not the information about good news, but the joy brought by good news. G.Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith*, pp. 87 ff.

<sup>157</sup> E.Fuchs, *Studies of the Historical Jesus*, p. 189.

#### 4. Retrospect

Käsemann's attempt to explain the Messiahship of Jesus through the authority of Jesus has been extensively evaluated by many theologians.<sup>158</sup> It may be true. However, Käsemann's real contribution can be sought in his attempt to trace the influence of the historical Jesus in Paul and John, although no one has paid attention to it. For over a century, New Testament scholarship has taken for granted that the Gospel of John might not be a source for the historical Jesus. This view was based on the differences between John and the Synoptics, and on the conviction that John's Gospel reflected the Hellenistic world. But recently there are quite a few scholars who believe that the historical value of John must be reconsidered.<sup>159</sup> More importantly, for Käsemann it is a good attempt to connect the 'Spirit', which is a unique

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<sup>158</sup>. Cf. Heinz Zahrnt, *The Historical Jesus* (London: Collins, 1963), pp. 117f. Alister E. McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 162. Norman Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 125f. James M. Robinson, *Op. cit.*, pp. 16, 90, 105.

<sup>159</sup>. Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John: i-xii* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1983), 2nd ed. pp. xlvii-li. C. K. Barret, *The Gospel According to St John* (London: SPCK, 1978), 2nd ed. pp. 141-144.

element of Jesus in the Synoptics, to the Spirit in the Pauline theology and the Gospel of John. However, it is an unfinished enterprise. There is a lack of concreteness in his attempt to bridge between the 'Spirit' of Jesus and the Spirit in the Pauline Theology. There are two reasons; i) Käsemann does not make it clear whether the 'Spirit' in the Synoptics can be the personal faith of Jesus or not. He does not explain the relationship between the Spirit and Jesus. ii) Even though the Spirit of Jesus can be identified with the Spirit in the Pauline theology, at this point actually Käsemann is not clear, Käsemann does not link the Spirit of Jesus with the main themes of the Pauline theology, such as, grace, law, life, etc. Accordingly Käsemann cannot explain how Paul and John continue each in his main themes the Spirit of Jesus, although he argues that Paul and John are influenced by the historical Jesus.

Fuchs and Ebeling concentrate on overcoming one of the most troublesome issues for the quest to the historical Jesus--the process of the transition from the 'proclaimer' to the 'proclaimed'. As far as tracing the process of transition is concerned, we may say that their attempts have been quite successful. However, they have raised a question through their works, that remains unanswered. According to them, many kerygmatic formulations of the early Church name the historical Jesus as their criterion. The kerygmatic statements of the New



Testament are essentially based upon the teaching of Jesus. The sole task of Jesus was to create the 'same faith' to his followers. Faith means to accept what God has done for us--the forgiveness of sins. In other words, what God offers us in the present is new life. "Our real life begins with faith".<sup>160</sup> In faith we are free from anxiety and the power of death, and free for the joy of life. This is the practical meaning of living in faith. This is what Jesus asked of his followers in the name of faith. Then, here we raise a question: If Jesus wanted to create not 'faith in him', but the same faith which he achieved, then when we accept what is being offered by God, do we have to rely on the name Jesus? In other words, if to have faith means to live like Jesus, can we live like Jesus without Jesus? There is no direct answer to this question in Fuchs and Ebeling. But Fuchs argues that one need not believe in Jesus to believe in God. The point of Fuchs' argument is that God speaks to us not only through Jesus. He acknowledges that there are many philosophers and Jews who believe in God without Jesus.<sup>161</sup> Then the motive of the quest of the historical Jesus in Fuchs and Ebeling should be pointed out again; the starting point of the new quest of the historical Jesus was the conviction that Jesus was the basis for the all

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<sup>160</sup>. E.Fuchs, *Studies of the Historical Jesus*, p. 40.

<sup>161</sup>. E.Fuchs, "Must One Believe in Jesus if He Wants to Believe in God?", pp. 157, 163.

the variability of the kerygma, i.e. Jesus is the content and criterion for the kerygma. The Christian faith would become an abstract idea or a mere myth without its ground-Jesus. But a result of their quest of the historical Jesus is that 'faith' means to accept salvation offered by God. In this sense Jesus had faith, and his activities aimed to inspire his followers to have the same faith. Therefore, Fuchs gives an impression that those who live in other spiritual tradition, whether they are Jews or philosophers, can have similar faith in God without Jesus. At this point Fuchs may be not happy at our comparing the meaning of faith initiated by Jesus and the universal character of the grace of God, which effects the forgiveness of sin for all. But, at any rate, if today we can live in the faith without Jesus, which Jesus asked of his followers, the uniqueness of Jesus, therefore, the uniqueness of Christian faith can be challenged. Fuchs and Ebeling leave this issue unexplained. This, however, will be a focal point in minjung theology, in chapter IV, which has had totally different traditions from the Christian tradition of Europe. Therefore we will deal with the meaning of the uniqueness for the historical Jesus and the Christian faith today in chapter V. Before this, in the next chapter we will look at the significance of the historical Jesus in Latin America.

### CHAPTER III. Liberation and Salvation: The Image of Jesus in Latin America

#### 1. A New Perspective

##### 1.1. Background

Along with an upheaval in society, many problems and therefore the attempts to solve the problems began to break out in 1950s, such as poverty, social injustice, a revolution, communism, etc. Latin America in the 1950s was characterised by great optimism regarding the possibility of achieving self-sustained economic development, which, in fact, meant foreign-oriented growth (exportation of primary products and importation of manufactured products). However, developmentalist politics did not yield the expected results. After more than half of the decade of the 1960s had passed, the gap between the first world and Latin America was increasing. A change of attitude occurred in the 1960s. A pessimistic diagnosis of economic, social and political realities replaced the preceding optimism. Therefore, the notion of dependence emerged as a key element in the interpretation of the Latin American reality. Latin Americans thought that their whole society had been formed by the exploitation of Latin America by foreign countries and their local allies, the land holding classes, and that their twentieth century

industry was not their own but that of multinational corporations. Peasant leagues were becoming militant groups — and social conscious middle-class people, particularly university students, were going to work directly with the poor.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the Church had no active role in society and kept largely silent. Most of the churches were located in cities, and priests and sisters usually served the privileged who could afford their own tuition in Catholic schools. Priests could visit villages in rural areas only at intervals of several weeks for ritual events. Under this situation, many priests and sisters working at the local level who felt the crisis, began to raise questions about their activities, and began to suspect the role of Church in their society. Starting in the 1960s, a great wind of renewal blew through the churches. Various church organizations promoted understanding of and improvements in the living condition of the people: Movements such as Young Christian Students, Young Christian Workers, the Movement for Basic Education, and the first base ecclesial communities.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>. Phillip Berryman, *Liberation Theology* (New York: Panton Books, 1987), pp. 9-15. Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), pp. 49-57. Alistair Kee, ed., *A Reader in Political Theology* (London: SCM, 1977), pp. 92-95.

<sup>2</sup>. L. Boff and C. Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (London: SCM, 1977), pp. 66ff. Phillip Berryman, *Op. cit.* pp. 15ff.

The Second Vatican Council produced a theological atmosphere characterised by great freedom and creativity. This gave Latin American theologians the courage to think for themselves about pastoral problems affecting their countries. Groups of theological thinkers, who were eagerly trying to find the true role of theology in their historical context, began to try to combine the everyday reality they experienced and the new ideas emerging from councils and meetings, such as Vatican II, Pope Paul VI's 1967 encyclical 'on the progress of people', and the Medellin Conference in 1968 which touched on 'institutionalized violence', 'situation of sin', 'human right', 'liberation', and 'base community', etc. This process could be seen at work among both Catholic and Protestant thinkers. The first Catholic congresses devoted to liberation theology were held in Bogota in March 1970 and July 1971. On the Protestant side, ISAL (Church and Society in Latin America) organized something similar in Buenos Aires the same years.<sup>3</sup> "The door was opened for the development of a theology from the periphery dealing with the concerns of this periphery, concerns that presented and still present an immense challenge to the evangelizing mission of the Church".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>. L. Boff and C. Boff, *Op. cit.*, pp. 68ff. Phillip Berryman, *Op. cit.*, pp. 15-27.

<sup>4</sup>. L. Boff and C. Boff, *Op. cit.*, p. 70.

## 1.2. The Poor<sup>5</sup> and the Praxis - Hermeneutic Circle

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<sup>5</sup>. It is not easy to grasp the precise conceptions of the 'poor' in Latin American theology. We will look at the meanings and brief definitions of the 'poor' for this chapter. We may understand the connotations of the 'poor' through the understanding of 'poverty'. i) Material poverty: First and the utmost, poverty is not spiritual but material. In the Old Testament, poverty is considered an evil, as a constant and painful fact, whose consequences are the establishment of relationships of dependence and oppression. When liberation theologians argue that Jesus chose to live with the poor and proclaimed the good news to the poor, 'poor' was not spiritual but material. It is a broadly accepted point that when the Old Testament and the Gospels mention poverty and the poor they signify, primarily, material poverty and the materially poor which are never ideal. It is beyond doubt that this material poverty and the poor furnish a new perspective to the liberation theologians. The concept of the material poor is expanding according to the experience of the liberation theologians. First the term 'poor' comes to be applied to economic, social and political level. Second, the term 'poor' attempts to include the 'new poor': the alienated, the elderly, the discriminated and women, etc. Therefore Boff says that the poor in Liberation theology is a much wider category than the 'proletariat' singled out by Marx. ii) Voluntary poverty: This is for the rich, or those who are not the materially poor. Therefore voluntary poverty is always connected to 'solidarity with the poor', who suffer misery and injustice. When liberation theologians take Jesus an example who became poor and died for the poor, this means 'voluntary poverty' or 'solidarity with the poor'. iii) Spiritual Poverty: This means an attitude of openness to the will of God as a spiritual child. We can call the spiritual poor those who place their whole trust in God alone. According to liberation theologians, this is the unique poverty for Christians which cannot be sought outside of Christianity. The relationship of those three kinds of poverty is this: When one becomes poor voluntarily (material poverty) in order to struggle with poverty in solidarity with the poor, one can experience spiritual poverty. Cf. Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp.291, 297,301, *The Power of the Poor in History* (London: SCM, 1983), pp. 13-15, 115. Julio de Santa Ana, *Good News to the Poor* (Geneva: WCC, 1977), pp. 1-7, 11-13, 19-22. L.Boff and C.Boff, *Op. cit.*, pp. 3f, 46-49.

Boff and Sobrino, like any other liberation theologians, have two methodological features which form the hermeneutical circle: i) to re-read the Bible by a new perspective obtained through the contact with the poor as historical reality ii) to interpret the biblical themes for the praxis of liberation process.

Boff argues that "the starting point is the brutal reality facing the vast majority of people on our Christian continent".<sup>6</sup> Therefore, rather than engaging in dialogue with other theologies, philosophers, or cultural movements, liberation theology has faced up the basic Latin American reality of underdevelopment and oppression, and this reality has supplied liberation theologians the motive and impetus for the development of liberation theology: "Thus liberation theology has not arisen primarily as an effort to *justify* real-life involvement. Instead it has arisen as a by-product of a concrete faith that is pondered and lived out in terms of the questions raised by involvement in the praxis of liberation".<sup>7</sup> In other words, with the eyes of the oppressed they approach the Scripture to get the principles of praxis.

*A rereading of the liberation content in theology is still another current in Latin American liberation*

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<sup>6</sup>. L.Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator* (London: SPCK, 1980), p. 268.

<sup>7</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads* (London: SCM, 1978), p. 33.



theology. It too begins with a perception of the reality of a people in misery. But instead of undertaking an analysis of the mechanisms of this misery, it immediately engages in a rereading of the content of theology where this content has to do with liberation. All themes in theology have a social and utopian dimension, which, in a socio-political context, must be recovered and placed in the service of the liberation process. Thus one can reread, using liberation as one's hermeneutical key, the mystery of God, of Christ, of the Church ....<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, although liberation theology takes all the books of the Bible into account, hermeneutical preferences become inevitable and even necessary for the praxis. The books most appreciated by liberation theology are Exodus, the prophets, the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and Revelation.<sup>9</sup> Boff and Sobrino give particular attention to the figure of Jesus. They hold the conviction that Jesus has been the key to liberation theology from the outset. Sobrino argues, "Christ is presented not only as the one who moves humanity toward liberation, but also as the norm of liberative practice and the prototype of the new human being for whom liberation strives. Jesus is *norma normans* of liberation, not its *norm normata*".<sup>10</sup>

### 1.3. New Attempts

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<sup>8</sup>. L.Boff, "Salvation in Liberation" in *Salvation and Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1984), by L.Boff and C.Boff, pp. 26-27.

<sup>9</sup>. L.Boff and C.Boff, *Op. cit.*, pp. 34f.

<sup>10</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America* (New York: Orbis, 1987), pp. 11-12.



According to Boff and Sobrino, theologians are framed within the overall social context. The themes and emphases of a given Christology flow from what seems relevant to the theologians on the basis of their social standpoints.<sup>11</sup> "Wittingly or unwittingly every Christology is elaborated within the context of a specific situation. The need for a 'new' Christology is felt in a 'new' situation, where people clearly feel the meaninglessness of the existing situation and glimpse the direction in which a new meaningfulness might be found".<sup>12</sup> Therefore they attempt to construct a new Christology for Latin American situation which can be distinguished from the Christologies developed in Europe.

Sobrino first points up a different root of liberation theology and that of European theology. According to him, the Enlightenment represents a challenge to theological understanding. Through its response to the challenge of the Enlightenment, the orientation of liberation theology and European theology can be traced. The Enlightenment has two phases which can be represented by two people-- Kant and Marx.<sup>13</sup> Sobrino contrasts the views of European theologians who ground their views in the first phase of

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<sup>11</sup>. L.Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, p. 265.

<sup>12</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, p. 347.

<sup>13</sup>. J.Sobrino, *The True Church and the Poor* (London: SCM, 1985), pp. 10f.

the Enlightenment, especially in the thought of Kant who advocated the liberation of human reason from divine authority, with liberation theologians who look to Marx as the liberator from the authority of social oppressors. The former seeks above all to understand reality through human reason, and the latter's primary concern is to transform reality through social action. Therefore, European theology approaches reality through the mediation of thought, such as theology, philosophy and culture. While liberation theology tries to approach reality as it is, even when it cannot draw any clear distinction between the reality as it is and the reality as interpreted theologically, philosophically, or culturally.<sup>14</sup>

After criticizing various kinds of Christological tendencies developed in Europe,<sup>15</sup> Boff suggests five criteria to construct a new Christology for Latin America:

a) The primacy of anthropology over ecclesiology--it will

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<sup>14</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16, 21-22. Boff also sees that liberation theology can use Marxism for its methodological purpose. Cf. L.Boff and C.Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, pp. 27-28. Sobrino's view is criticized by the fact that he confusingly distinguishes two phases of the Enlightenment exemplified by Kant and Marx; accordingly, European theology and liberation theology have been characterized by two different analyses and therefore two different forms of liberation. [See, Alistair Kee, *Marx and the Failure of Liberation Theology* (London: SCM & Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), pp. 189ff.] However, our concern here is not to examine whether Sobrino's view is correct, but is to understand Sobrino's 'intention' and 'attempt' to develop Latin American theology which has a different perspective from that of European theology.

<sup>15</sup>. Cf. L.Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, pp. 2-17.

focus on human need rather than ecclesiastical dogma and structure. b) The primacy of the utopian over the factual--its orientation will be towards the future, the utopian element. The determining element in Latin American person is not the past. c) The primacy of the critical over the dogmatic element--it will be open to dialogue with history and not be concerned with preserving the religious mentality of the status quo. d) The primacy of the social over the personal--it will lay stress on the social dimension of the liberating work of Jesus. e) The primacy of orthopraxis over orthodoxy--it will give special attention to Jesus who calls us to correct action more than to correct beliefs.<sup>16</sup>

Accordingly, the emphases and conceptions of theological words of liberation Christology can be different from that of European Christology in accordance with its starting point, with its perspective, and with its hermeneutical circle. We point out two things before looking at the Christologies of Boff and Sobrino in detail:

i) They do not distinguish the words of Jesus from the formulations of the primitive Christian community based on critical exegesis. They argue that Latin American Christology is not mainly interested in responding to

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<sup>16</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-47.

historical criticism.<sup>17</sup> It does not mean that they ignore the literary condition of the gospel narratives with respect to their historicity. They know that the gospel narratives about Jesus are themselves theologized, and that the factual data concerning Jesus are not directly and immediately accessible from the gospel narratives. Their argument is that because the gospel narratives are theologized, the best way to the historical Jesus is through the historicized Jesus. In order to historicize Jesus, his whole life must be historicized in a determinate manner. Therefore their interest consists rather in discovering historically the basic structure and backdrop of Jesus' preaching and practice.<sup>18</sup> They are convinced that they are in the privileged place for that. They claim that the historical situation of Latin America and that of Jesus' time show striking parallels: "The socio-political situation in Jesus' day presents striking parallels to the situation that gave rise to liberation theology in Latin America".<sup>19</sup> They argue several structural similarities between the two; a) The socio-political and cultural dependence on the powerful foreign countries

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<sup>17</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 65.

<sup>18</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, pp. 71-74.

<sup>19</sup>. L.Boff, "Christ's Liberation via Oppression: An Attempt at Theological Construction from the Standpoint of Latin America", in *Frontiers of Theology in Latin America* (New York: Orbis, 1979), ed. R.Gibellini, p. 103. Cf. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 72.

around it. b) The socio-economic and religious oppression within society. c) The poor and outcast make up the majority of the society. d) This majority is not only the sum total of individuals who are poor and outcast as individuals, but also collectivity made up of social groups.<sup>20</sup> In this context Sobrino argues;

In Latin America the rediscovery of Jesus of Nazareth is to be credited not primarily to theological investigation, but to the fact that the gospel has been restored to its rightful place--to the place where it ought to be read, to the place where it becomes transparent for us all.<sup>21</sup>

ii) They do not distinguish the historical Jesus from the Christ of faith in the European sense of the word. In fact there is no conceptual consistency in their use of 'Jesus' as distinguished from 'Christ'. They are, of course, concerned to concretize the Kerygma of Jesus of Nazareth. Sobrino says, "But it does not engage in the return to the historical Jesus for this reason formally; or, to put it more generally, it does not return to the historical Jesus in order to solve the general question of the New Testament: the relationship between the Christ who is preached and the Christ who preaches".<sup>22</sup> Instead, they

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<sup>20</sup>. L.Boff, "Christ's Liberation via Oppression", pp. 103-106. Cf. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, pp. 71f, 141f.

<sup>21</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 170.

<sup>22</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 65.

distinguish loosely between Jesus (or the historical Jesus) and the total Christ (or the totality of Jesus). For Boff and Sobrino the former encapsulates the New Testament presentation of Jesus' words and deeds in the framework of his life in the light of praxis. The latter signifies the risen Christ viewed after the resurrection. Therefore they can explain the relationship between the two, for example, in saying that we gain access to the total Christ through the discipleship given by Jesus.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>. Cf. J.Sobrino, *Christology at Crossroads*, pp. 275f, 351f. L.Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, pp. 229f, 232f.

## 2. The Life of Jesus

### 2.1. Jesus in His Mission: L.Boff

Boff has a dual-structure concerning the reign of God. On the one hand, it is still future and will be fulfilled only by God, i.e. it is utopian hope for human race. On the other hand, we can participate in partial realization of the reign of God, and experience its present power in history. In the original version of *Jesus Christ Liberator*, published in 1972, the character of the reign of God and the image of Jesus appear quite universal. In his later works, Boff tries to apply socio-political dimension to the reign of God and Jesus, but without changing basic structure.

Boff argues that Jesus preaches neither himself nor the Church but the reign of God.<sup>24</sup> However, Jesus does not invent the word 'reign of God'. From the Old Testament times there have been the fundamental longings in the human heart for liberation and a new creation. Jesus as a man of his time breathes the apocalyptic atmosphere, the expectation of the end of the world, typical in the times of the New Testament. He assumes the totality of his

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<sup>24</sup>. L.Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, p. 49.

people's remarkable hope.<sup>25</sup> In spite of this common element, Jesus' preaching of the reign of God differs from the expectation of the people in two points:

Firstly, for Jesus the reign of God possesses universal and transcendental character. Therefore it has nothing to do with the nationalism of the Jews or the restoration of the Davidic kingdom. Boff argues;

The kingdom of God that Christ announces is not a liberation from this or that evil, from the political oppression of the Romans, from the economic difficulties of the people, or from sin alone. The kingdom of God cannot be narrowed down to any particular aspect.<sup>26</sup>

In the early works of Boff, the term 'liberation' also does not have deep socio-political dimension; "Christ however understand his liberation in a much more universal manner, as total transfiguration of this world, people and cosmos, calling it the Kingdom of God".<sup>27</sup> Therefore, Jesus' liberation activity does not have political aims, nor does it even aim explicitly at the social virtues of justice and the like.<sup>28</sup> Jesus maintains this universal, cosmic perspective in everything he says and does.

He did not immediately satisfy the concrete and

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<sup>25</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-57.

<sup>26</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>27</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>28</sup>. L.Boff, "Image of Jesus in Brazilian Liberal Christianity", in *Faces of Jesus* (New York: Orbis, 1984), ed. J.Miguez Bonino. p. 21.



limited expectations of his listeners. He called them together for the sake of some absolutely transcendent dimension that goes far beyond the facticity of this world and its history of special interests, power plays, and the survival of the fittest. Instead of proclaiming some particular kind of meaning, be it political, economic, or social, he proclaims an absolute sense that embraces but supersedes everything.<sup>29</sup>

Concerning the reign of God, Boff argues, the great temptation is an attempt to regionalize it: "The Kingdom of God represents the totality of the world in God. The temptation is to regionalize it and particularize it down to one political model, one ideology of the common goal or one religion".<sup>30</sup> Jesus himself is confronted with the same temptation. This temptation besets Jesus throughout his life, but he overcomes it. For Jesus, the final realization of the utopian hope, the reign of God, which embraces everything, will be fulfilled only by God at the end of history. Therefore, the fact that the reign of God expresses human being's utopian longings does not mean that the reign of God is an organic extension or development of this world, as it is encountered in history.<sup>31</sup> "The Kingdom does not evolve, but breaks in".<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>. L.Boff, "Christ's Liberation via Oppression", p. 107.

<sup>30</sup>. L.Boff, "Salvation in Jesus Christ and the Process of Liberation", in *Concilium*, vol. 6, No.10, 1974. p. 82.

<sup>31</sup>. L.Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, pp. 63f.

<sup>32</sup>. L.Boff, "Salvation in Jesus Christ and the Process of Liberation", p. 82.

In this context, at least as far as the final goal of the reign of God is concerned, Boff's view is clear:

Liberation is true liberation only if it possesses a universal and globalizing character, only if it translates and embodies the absolute meaningfulness sought by human kind. We pervert the original and pristine sense of the kingdom as means by Jesus when and if we regionalize it and the concept of liberation by defining it in terms of some ideology of well-being or some particular religion.<sup>33</sup>

Secondly, despite its universal and future element the reign of God is radically initiated by Jesus. The utopia of the Old Testament has never been fulfilled. However, Jesus proclaims the reign of God as no longer an unattainable human utopia, but as a reality already initiated in our world.<sup>34</sup> "What is most emphasized in Jesus is the authority with which the kingdom is announced and is made already present by signs and unspoken gestures".<sup>35</sup> The miracles of Jesus, for example, do not primarily reveal the divinity of Jesus, but demonstrate that the reign of God is already present and fermenting within this world.<sup>36</sup> For Jesus the reign of God is not a territory but a new order. Jesus makes two fundamental demands for the new order: Jesus i) demands personal conversion and ii)

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<sup>33</sup>. L.Boff, "Christ's Liberation via Oppression", pp. 107-108.

<sup>34</sup>. L.Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>35</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>36</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

postulates a restructuring of the human world.

i) Conversion means changing one's mode of thinking and acting to suit God, and therefore an interior revolution. 'Being converted' does not consist in pious exercise, but rather in a new mode of existing before God.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, Jesus criticizes egoism, the human will to the power, and particularly self-sufficient models. These human attitudes are sin. Sin consists in closing in on oneself to a point where one excludes God, in a centring of the 'I' on itself.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, conversion for the reign of God signifies the complete emptying of self which opens the way to the fullness of God.

The kingdom happens when man leaves the security of his past and gives himself up to the future of God, or the God of the future. Hence the kingdom of God is only inaugurated when conversion occurs, which means leaving room for God, emptying oneself and experiencing an exodus.<sup>39</sup>

Jesus himself is the best example of this way of life, i.e. Jesus himself is the best personal example of the reign of God for his hearers.<sup>40</sup> Jesus creates a new attitude in the presence of concrete human realities.

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<sup>37</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>38</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 202. L.Boff, "Salvation in Jesus Christ and the Process of Liberation", p. 86.

<sup>39</sup>. L.Boff, "Salvation in Jesus Christ and the Process of Liberation", p. 86.

<sup>40</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 84., L.Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, p. 84.

This new attitude means faith.<sup>41</sup> "Faith is the existential attitude that interprets all reality from a point of departure in God".<sup>42</sup> "According to this definition, Jesus was an extraordinary believer and had faith. Faith was Jesus' way of life".<sup>43</sup> Jesus shows the new human by his life. In this sense, "he can be an example and prototype-archetype of the true human being that each of us ought to be but is not as yet".<sup>44</sup>

ii) Jesus is against the established order in his society, since "the present order of things cannot save people from their fundamental alienation".<sup>45</sup> In other words, this world, as it is, cannot be the location of the reign of God. According to Boff, in the Jewish religion at the time of Jesus everything is sanctioned as the will of God expressed in the sacred books of the law. Jesus protests this enslavement of the human person in the name of law. Jesus comports himself as one higher than the laws. A rabbi is an interpreter of the laws, while Jesus discerns in them the will of God. If the laws enhance the life of human beings, Jesus accepts them. If, on the

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<sup>41</sup>. L.Boff, "Salvation in Jesus Christ and the Process of Liberation", p. 83.

<sup>42</sup>. L.Boff, "Integral Liberation and Partial Liberation", in *Salvation and Liberation*, p. 52.

<sup>43</sup>. L.Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, p.113.

<sup>44</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>45</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

contrary, they legitimate enslavement, he repudiates them and demands that they be broken. The eschatological character of the Sermon on the Mount can be understood in the light of demanding fundamental human equality-- 'all are worthy of love'.<sup>46</sup> Jesus does not discriminate against anyone, neither heretics nor schismatic Samaritans, nor people of ill repute like the prostitute, nor the marginalized, nor the rich. Jesus proclaims the reign of God not for the special groups but for all, i.e. Jesus offers salvation to all indiscriminately, the good and the bad.<sup>47</sup> In Boff, However, it does not mean that Jesus does not show partisan love for the poor. The point here is that though Jesus clashes with the established order and social structure, and though Jesus is against the religious leaders and oppressors, the message of Jesus itself is 'universal'. Because, rather, the message of Jesus is a universal character of demanding fundamental equality, it can be an offence to those who have vested rights in their society status quo. Boff argues that "his universal message of the kingdom stands as a radical criticism of the religion of his time".<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, the universal message of Jesus can be good news for

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<sup>46</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 67-71, 82.

<sup>47</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 82. L.Boff, "Salvation in Jesus Christ and the Process of Liberation", p. 83.

<sup>48</sup>. L.Boff, "Salvation in Jesus Christ and the Process of Liberation", p. 83.

the poor. This explains the following quotation;

Because of their marginalized situation within the socio-religious Jewish system, they are quicker to listen to and follow the message of Jesus. They have nothing to lose because they have nothing and are nothing socially. They have only to wait. This is not so for the Pharisees. They are structured into the system that they created for themselves. They are rich, well known, have religion, and are confident that God is at their side.<sup>49</sup>

Theologically speaking, the poor are in the 'better' position to accept Jesus' demand. The poor are better prepared to open themselves to God. In this sense, "the marginalized of the present order are nearer the kingdom of God than all other".<sup>50</sup>

In the English translation of *Jesus Christ Liberator*, published in 1978, Boff adds an Epilogue, 'A Christological view from the Periphery'. In this Epilogue Boff argues;

We must maintain that no Christology is or can be neutral. Every Christology is partisan and committed. ... A Christology that proclaims Jesus Christ as the Liberator seeks to be committed to the economic, social, and political liberation of those groups that are oppressed and dominated.<sup>51</sup>

It is true, in his latter works, Boff attempts to add socio-political character to the reign of God, therefore

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<sup>49</sup>. L.Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>50</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>51</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 265-266.

to the mission of Jesus. But the remarkable thing is that Boff does not change his basic dual-structure concerning the reign of God. Boff gives just slight modification to two basic 'conceptions'; i) The reign of God in terms of its final goal is expressed as the total liberation (or salvation), but the connotations have not been changed at all, i.e. both the reign of God in terms of its final goal in his earlier works and the total liberation in his latter works mean utopian hope which will be fulfilled by God in the future.<sup>52</sup> ii) The reign of God in terms of its present reality is expressed as the historical (or partial) liberation. Then, we have to examine how Boff, who is still arguing that Jesus rejects any kind of political power or organization,<sup>53</sup> connects his emphases on the socio-political praxis to his Christology. The following quotation will give us a clue.

If we now see that history still has a future and that the parousia has been delayed, then we can and should relativize this attitude of the historical Jesus and attribute it to the limitations imposed on him by his cultural milieu and its verbal categories. That frees theology to view a takeover of political power as a proper and legitimate way of offering more justice to the alienated and oppressed.<sup>54</sup>

The crucial point to add socio-political dimension to his Christology is that 'the parousia has been delayed'.

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<sup>52</sup>. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 275, 280-281.

<sup>53</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 286.

<sup>54</sup>. *Ibid.*



But it never means that Boff re-approaches the reign of God and the mission of Jesus to re-interpret the apocalyptic element involved in them.<sup>55</sup> Instead, Boff stresses just several points which are implied in the idea of the reign of God to make room for the socio-political praxis.<sup>56</sup> These points can be summed up largely by two aspects; i) Jesus shows the partisan love to the poor. ii) Therefore we have to follow his cause--the discipleship or the solidarity with the poor. Boff's Christological foundation for liberating praxis is based on this point, i.e. his emphasis on liberating praxis is grounded only on one cause of Jesus. Accordingly, in his Christological structure the socio-political praxis is always dealt with separately in the connection with 'discipleship' on the level of historical liberation. In fact Boff has no intention to deal with Christology itself in connection with the socio-political dimension;

Christology enjoys autonomy in elaborating its discourse in line with its own methodology. It has its own mode of theoretical praxis, and it does not have to justify itself before some outside tribunal. It possesses its own inner laws and criteria to determine its own internal truth.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>. So, in slightly different manner, Boff continues to argue that only at the end of history we will know who Jesus was and is. Cf. L.Boff, "Salvation in Jesus Christ and the Process of Liberation", p. 78.

<sup>56</sup>. Cf. L.Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, p. 286.

<sup>57</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 267.



Therefore, even though Boff argues that Christology has to presuppose and depend on socio-political analysis, that he uses Marxism as an instrument for that, and though he suggests strategy and tactics to achieve that,<sup>58</sup> they do not affect his Christology. These matters are dealt with independently apart from his Christological structures. "Boff accepts Marxist analysis applied to society, but he does not apply it to theology".<sup>59</sup> He tries to find justification for this in arguing that Jesus does not supply socio-political principles;

When the faith assures us that the future of the world is guaranteed by the full liberation of the risen Christ, it does not give us, as many Christians mistakenly believe, the key to all political and social enigmas. ... The gospel encourages us to use the creative imagination to elaborate ideologies.<sup>60</sup>

Boff now has to concentrate on two things: i) He tries to give theological meaning to historical liberation in economic, social and political realms (not trying to give socio-political meaning to Christology). ii) By laying weight on the historical liberation, the gap between the total liberation (salvation) and the historical liberation becomes explicit, which is implicit from the beginning in

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<sup>58</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 267, 274. L.Boff and C.Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, pp. 13, 28, 40.

<sup>59</sup>. Alistair Kee, *Marx and the Failure of Liberation Theology*, p. 224.

<sup>60</sup>. L.Boff, "Salvation in Jesus Christ and the Process of Liberation", p. 90.

the form of the reign of God as utopian hope in the future and the reign of God as a present reality. Therefore he tries to bridge the gap. For Boff the first issue is easier to deal with; salvation is not actualized only in the last moment of one's life or in eternity. Economic and political liberation can have a theological dimension, since a commitment on the praxis of Christians to economics and politics can involve a commitment to God, i.e. historical liberation can be mediation of God.<sup>61</sup>

It is important to keep this perspective in view; the struggle for economic, political, and educational liberation goes beyond the scope of these areas. They have a theological dimension. Because concretizing sociological liberation as such, they concretize the liberation given by God. In other words, in these realities, considered to be secular, there is real, but hidden, theological element.<sup>62</sup>

Next, Boff attempts to establish the relationship between the total liberation and the historical liberation. He tries to connect them by 'anticipation', i.e. we can experience *partial realization* of the total liberation here and now: "Historical liberations are thus anticipations and concretization, ever limited, but real, of the salvation that will be full and complete only in eternity".<sup>63</sup> However, Boff cannot stress one-sidedly the

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<sup>61</sup>. Cf. L.Boff, "Integral Liberation and Partial Liberation", p. 41.

<sup>62</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>63</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

historical liberation, because he is well aware of the danger of reductionism, that theology should not reduce its task to the dimension of a temporal project.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, he tries to synthesize them in this metaphysical way: the definite breakthrough of the total liberation will be the gratuitous work of God. Human beings should prepare for it in anticipation, but they cannot induce it.<sup>65</sup>

The total liberation proposed by God must take the pathway of partial liberations. While the former is not simply the sum of the latter, the latter do anticipate and pave the way for the former.<sup>66</sup>

However the relationship between the two is not quite clear. Boff introduces again the term 'process' to connect the total liberation (future element) and the historical liberation (present element). In Boff future elements of the reign of God are based on the parables of the yeast, of the seed placed in the earth, of the dandel and the wheat and of the dragnet of good and bad fishes. Boff takes these parables as examples which are fermenting in the present towards future.<sup>67</sup> Here Boff uses the term 'process', instead of 'growth'. Boff asserts that "there

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<sup>64</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>65</sup>. L.Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, p. 286.

<sup>66</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 287.

<sup>67</sup>. L.Boff, "Salvation in Jesus Christ and the Process of Liberation", pp. 84-85.

is no separation between present and future, but a process of liberation".<sup>68</sup> However, because Boff juxtaposes 'present' and 'future' on the linear time, 'process' connotes a series of movement from present towards future consummation.<sup>69</sup>

The relationship between the two remains still obscure. The point is that Boff does not explain the decisive thing whether human efforts for the historical liberation can affect the total liberation.<sup>70</sup> Boff maintains the eschatological element and ethical element of Jesus together without harmony. Boff first depends on the eschatological element for his Christology, i.e. this element is applied to form the final goal of utopian hope concerning the reign of God, and the ideal archetype of human beings concerning the image of Jesus; in this regard the mission and figure of Jesus are viewed as 'universal'.

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<sup>68</sup>. L.Boff, "Salvation in Jesus Christ and the Process of Liberation", p. 85.

<sup>69</sup>. However, contemporary biblical scholars demonstrate that those parables do not indicate 'future' or 'growth', but 'Jesus' confidence of God', 'contrast', or 'gift'. But our concern is not to criticize Boff's exegesis of the New Testament. We will deal with this issue latter. Cf. J.D. Crossan, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 37-52. Norman Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 154-159.

<sup>70</sup>. Recently Boff again tries to establish the relationship between liberation and salvation. But he repeats his previous argument without explaining whether and in what manner historical liberation of man can affect salvation of Christ. Cf. L.Boff, *When Theology Listens to the Poor* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 180-182.

And Boff singles out one 'cause' from Jesus' mission--the option for the poor--and connects this with the liberating praxis. Therefore when Jesus is viewed in this cause (in the connection with the partisan love for the poor) he appears as 'protestor' and 'liberator'. But when Boff deals with 'Jesus' without this cause, namely, when he comes to the divinity of Jesus and the doctrine of Trinity in his late work, the apolitical, universal, traditional and ontological image of Jesus appears clearly: The Father creates the world out of nothing through the Son in the Holy Spirit.<sup>71</sup> There has been tri-personal nature of God in the Old Testament.<sup>72</sup> The Son has the same nature as the Father (*homoousios*), and the third Person is the Spirit that unites the Father and the Son as the link of love between them.<sup>73</sup> The Holy Spirit is breathed out by the Father and the Son (*Filioque*).<sup>74</sup> "The Persons mutually reveal themselves to one another".<sup>75</sup> Boff continues;

The Father wanted the individual Jesus of Nazareth, hypostatically united to the Son, to give supreme glory to the Father through his life, his works and his passion, and to root the Trinity in the midst the human race and all of creation. ... This Son is supremely at work in taking on the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth, in whom he communicates himself

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<sup>71</sup>. L. Boff, *Trinity and Society* (Kent: Burns & Oates, 1988), pp. 41, 222ff.

<sup>72</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 40f.

<sup>73</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 48f, 183, 189-190.

<sup>74</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 185ff.

<sup>75</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

completely.<sup>76</sup>

In Boff the relationship of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, and the relationship between the divinity and humanity of Jesus is dealt with ontologically, not functionally. In this context, for Boff the historical Jesus, whose humanity is taken temporally by the second Person of pre-existence, is the archetype of human beings. While the total Christ before the incarnation and after the resurrection is the second Person of the Son in the traditional doctrine of the Trinity, who is consubstantial with the Father.

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<sup>76</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

## 2.2. The History of Jesus: J.Sobrino

Sobrino sees that Jesus begins his activity with the consciousness of a Jew who has received the best traditions concerning God, stemming from the history of his people. However Jesus did not talk simply about God but about the reign of God. Jesus is not the central focus of his own preaching. Jesus proclaimed not himself but the reign of God. In making this proclamation, Jesus continued that of John the Baptist. In this sense Jesus did not preach anything absolutely new, but summarized the hope and expectations of the traditions of his people. When Jesus proclaimed the reign of God, Jesus assumed that his audience knew about it and is waiting for its coming.<sup>77</sup> For Sobrino, Jesus makes use of three traditions; i) the prophetic tradition in which God is never God *in se*, but is always in relationship with history. He is a God of conflict precisely because he is partial to the oppressed, ii) the apocalyptic tradition which stresses the renewal of reality by God at the end of time, and iii) the sapiential tradition in which God allows both the just and

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<sup>77</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, pp. 41-42. *Jesus in Latin America*, pp. 85, 132.

the unjust to grow up together in history.<sup>78</sup> However, for Sobrino Jesus's notion of God changes in accordance with his experience of life:

We must adopt a different approach in trying to resolve the question of Jesus' notion of God. Any attempt at a solution must be based on the history of Jesus himself. We should not start off assuming that Jesus held some notion of God from the very start. Instead we should assume that in his concrete history he gradually wove together strands from the various traditions about God in order to form his own fabric. The originality of Jesus lies precisely in the concrete synthesis that he was fashioning his whole life long.<sup>79</sup>

For Sobrino Jesus shares the condition of every human being--suffering, obedience, conversion, etc. He argues that "Jesus' consciousness was fully human, so we are perfectly justified in talking about the faith of Jesus".<sup>80</sup> Jesus' life goes through different stages which are distinct not only on the external, but on the level of his interior life. Throughout his life, faith is the very mode of Jesus existence and it has a history.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, Sobrino claims that "the historical Jesus is the history of Jesus, that the faith of Jesus is the history of his faith".<sup>82</sup> Sobrino approaches the reign of God and the

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<sup>78</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, pp. 160f. *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 83.

<sup>79</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, p. 162.

<sup>80</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 366.

<sup>81</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 90, 160.

<sup>82</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 164.



cause of Jesus for the historical liberation in the framework of the 'history of Jesus', which shows two distinctive stages, different phases of Jesus' faith and of his notion of God. Because Sobrino understands the history of Jesus in the process of several stages, external and internal, the system of Sobrino's Christology seems to be very vulnerable in a way reminiscent of the old quest of Europe in the nineteenth century. However, in order to grasp the basic Christological structures clearly in Sobrino, we will follow in our examining the two stages in order, and we will look at the 'crisis of Galilee and the temptations' between the two stages. Though we follow the two stages in Sobrino, our investigation will also centre around several main themes such as the reign of God, the discipleship, sin, etc.

#### The First Stage: From the Beginning of Public Activity to the Crisis of Galilee

At the start of his public life Jesus appears as an orthodox Jew following the earlier traditions of his people. The baptism of Jesus means that Jesus decides to accept his mission from God. In this phase of Jesus' ministry, both faith and discipleship derive their motivation from the notion of the reign of God, not directly from the *concrete person of Jesus* himself. Therefore, the figure of Jesus is seen against the backdrop of the reign of God, particularly its apocalyptic

element.<sup>83</sup>

a. The reign of God and sin: For Sobrino Jesus believes that God's coming and his reign are imminent in time. Jesus expects the irruption of the reign of God during his own life time.<sup>84</sup> Jesus and the Zealots are in agreement on the point that both see their mission as the establishment of the kingdom of God, and they claim its establishment as imminent.<sup>85</sup> "Jesus himself shares the apocalyptic conviction that the breaking-in of the kingdom is God's work alone".<sup>86</sup> For Jesus the reign of God means that "it is not merely an extension of human potentialities; it breaks in as grace".<sup>87</sup> While other contemporary eschatological preachers (such as John the Baptist) proclaim the imminent judgement of God, Jesus views the reign of God as good news coming by 'grace'. This means that: i) the reign of God is due to God's initiative, and ii) the reign of God is salvation.<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, Jesus personally feels a special relationship with God. "He linked the coming of the kingdom to

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<sup>83</sup>. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 360, 365.

<sup>84</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 89.

<sup>85</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 212.

<sup>86</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, p. 56.

<sup>87</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>88</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

himself".<sup>89</sup> For Jesus the reign of God is already dawning with his activities. Sobrino argues that both Jesus' miracles and forgiveness of sins are primarily signs of the arrival of the reign of God. Miracles are not important because of their disconcerting or astonishing aspects but because they bear witness to God's saving action. "We would do better to refer to them as 'signs' rather than 'miracles', and to interpret them as being related to the kingdom of God (see Luke 11:20; Mark 3:22f; Matt. 1:21f). They are preaching about the kingdom in deeds, in which the nearness of God is made concrete and visible. This is particularly true of the exorcisms that break the lordship of Satan".<sup>90</sup>

Basically, Sobrino acknowledges that Jesus stresses the universal character of sin as coming from the human heart. Sin is people's self-affirmation which leads them to secure themselves against God.<sup>91</sup> And historically sin has two main features which are related to human power. On the one hand, sin is one's self-sufficiency to secure oneself with human power against God (personal character). On the other hand, sin is to use human power to oppress others (social character).<sup>92</sup> Therefore, "the real sinners

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<sup>89</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 20.

<sup>90</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>91</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, pp. 34f.

<sup>92</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, pp.

are the persons with power who use it both to secure themselves against God and to oppress others".<sup>93</sup> In other words, "structurally, those human beings who oppress are 'more sinners' than the oppressed",<sup>94</sup> i.e. the oppressed lack social character of sin. In this period, however, the point worth noting is that sin is not seen simply as saying 'no' to God but as saying no to the reign of God. Therefore overcoming sin becomes the criterion for verifying whether one has accepted the good news of the reign of God or not.<sup>95</sup> In other words, "for Jesus sin is the rejection of God's kingdom which is drawing near in grace".

b. The use of power and discipleship: Let us take a quotation:

This leads us to consider the relationship between Jesus and power. In the first stage of his public life it is concretely embodied in his use of miracles. Jesus utilizes power, placing all that is his in the service of the kingdom: his idea of God and the kingdom, his time and energy, the power of his preaching and of his miracles. At this point, then, Jesus does not ignore power nor underestimate the value of power;<sup>96</sup>

For Sobrino, Jesus puts all his energy and activity in

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<sup>93</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>94</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 35.

<sup>95</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, p. 51.

<sup>96</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 358.

the service of the reign of God, but he still waits the irruption of it. On the one hand, when Jesus preaches something for his followers, he differentiates his disciples from others. The disciples are called and chosen on the initiative of Jesus alone. In the first stage, the content of this discipleship is a summons to carry out a task to proclaim the coming reign of God. Jesus restricts the summons to this discipleship to only a few. This discipleship here means a messianic conception of discipleship rather than a Christological conception in the strict sense, because the centre of this discipleship is to proclaim the reign of God, not Jesus, i.e. the disciples believe that Jesus is a messianic figure or the Son of Man.<sup>97</sup> On the other hand, when Jesus approaches certain types of people such as the poor, the sick, and the public sinners, he imposes on them one fundamental demand that they have faith in the coming God's reign. "He asked them to accept the belief that their present situation of poverty and social ostracism was not the last word on their life because it was not the ultimate that God could do. What he demands of them, then, is faith and hope in God along with certain moral exigencies, summed up in his phrase: 'Go and sin no more.'"<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 116-117, 264.

<sup>98</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

### The Crisis in Galilee and the Temptations:

For Sobrino 'the crisis in Galilee and the temptations' is placed between the two stages. In Sobrino the remarkable point is that in this intermediate period Jesus' self-consciousness and his understanding of mission have been changed, which would be explicit in the second period. Sobrino carefully handles the crisis of Galilee and temptation as a bond to link two different stages, otherwise these stages would be isolated: Jesus comes to realize that he has failed in his mission as he had previously understood it. Therefore, according to Sobrino there is a real break in both the internal awareness and external activity of Jesus. The faith of Jesus as the guiding principle of his activity enters a new stage that is not an inertial continuation of the first stage.<sup>99</sup> "There is some rupture in his inner consciousness and his outer activity, suggesting a rupture in his faith".<sup>100</sup> Jesus stops talking to the crowds and concentrates his activity on his own disciples. "He is tempted to withdraw into seclusion, to picture his mission more in terms of some restricted sect".<sup>101</sup> Jesus sees the need to examine the will of God concerning the reign of God and himself.

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<sup>99</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>100</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>101</sup>. *Ibid.*

Sobrino believes that the temptation of Jesus must be dealt with between the two stages; Jesus himself is threatened with critical crisis of self-identify. According to Sobrino, the authentic backdrop of the temptations is Jesus' conceptions of God and the reign of God.<sup>102</sup> "Strictly speaking, the dialogue does not take place between Jesus and Satan but between Jesus and the Father".<sup>103</sup> Jesus is asked what sort of power truly can mediate God and hence bring his reign nearer. This has to do with the concrete way in which Jesus will carry out his mission. Jesus overcomes the crisis, but it has thoroughly reshaped his faith.<sup>104</sup> "He comes to realize that the revelation of God as love can only come about when power is subordinated to the law of service in a sinful world. Thus power is transformed into a love willing to accept suffering and defeat at the hands of the world's sinfulness".<sup>105</sup>

#### The Second Stage: From Galilean Crisis to the Death

a. The reign of God: The referential pole of Jesus' life continues to be the Father. "He continues to have

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<sup>102</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>103</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>104</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 98.

<sup>105</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 369.

confidence in him, but now that confidence finds nothing in which to root".<sup>106</sup> The hope and confidence he proclaimed earlier become a hoping against hope. "Insofar as the kingdom of God is concerned, Jesus no longer sees its imminent arrival".<sup>107</sup> However, Sobrino does not expound how much in the second stage the conceptions of the reign of God has been changed concretely. His emphasis falls on only one point that Jesus does not expect the imminent coming of the reign of God. In Sobrino this does not mean that the apocalyptic element of the 'reign of God' has been removed in the second stage, but 'Jesus' no longer moves on by an apocalyptic idea. We will deal with this issue later.

b. The use of power and discipleship: While in the first stage, Jesus uses all the power he has, displaying it in his persuasiveness, his lucid ideas, and his miracles. But in the second stage of his public life Jesus raises serious questions about such use of power, because the power he displayed has now proved to be ineffective. Jesus has to choose between worldly power and the power of God--love. All that is left for Jesus is the power of love in suffering.<sup>108</sup> "Fidelity to the Father now stands in the presence, not of the Father's imminent

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<sup>106</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>107</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 365, 369, 94. J. Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 38.



coming, but of Jesus' imminent death. And Jesus sees his death as the death of his cause".<sup>109</sup> After the Galilean crisis Jesus moves towards an unknown future over which he has no control. Jesus surrenders his ideas and his person, accepting death. On the cross, Jesus feels that he has been abandoned by God. "Jesus dies in total discontinuity with his life and his cause. The death he experienced was not only the death of his person but also the death of his cause".<sup>110</sup> Sobrino continues: Jesus is made perfect through suffering by God. "Thus we can say that Jesus *becomes* the Son of God rather than that he simply *is* the Son of God".<sup>111</sup>

The demand of discipleship is no longer simply an invitation to preach the coming reign of God. Discipleship is now a summons to take up the cross as Jesus did. The demand of the discipleship is no longer restricted to Jesus' own disciples, it is proposed to 'all'.<sup>112</sup> Jesus realized that people's ultimate salvation is functionally related to *his own person*.<sup>113</sup> Sobrino argues that "the demands made in the second phase of his public life must be viewed more strictly in the light of

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<sup>109</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, p. 94.

<sup>110</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>111</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>112</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 118.

<sup>113</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

Jesus' own concrete person and destiny".<sup>114</sup>

Discipleship no longer means following a messiah in his messianic function. It now means following his own person in all scandalous concreteness: following him even to the cross.<sup>115</sup>

This would mean that Jesus himself asks to have 'faith in him'. In this context, Sobrino argues that 'faith in Jesus' can be achieved only through following the way of Jesus, and that the Christian faith today possesses one ultimate criterion--Jesus himself.<sup>116</sup>

We can approach Sobrino's argument about the 'history of Jesus' in the three points: i) the apocalyptic element in the reign of God, ii) the issue of the continuity between the proclaimer and the proclaimed, and iii) the discipleship and the divinity of Jesus.

Firstly, in the second stage, Sobrino argues, for Jesus the reign of God is no longer imminent. But Sobrino maintains the tension between the future reign of God as utopia, which will be fulfilled by God, and the present anticipation of the reign of God, though his emphasis is given on the latter. The reason is that for Sobrino it is necessary to keep a utopian goal 'for Christian praxis',

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<sup>114</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 361.

<sup>115</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>116</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 129. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, pp. 53-54.

not Christian praxis for the reign of God. Sobrino claims that "the Church must maintain the utopian principle of the kingdom of God", because "that principle spurs us on to carry out historical project".<sup>117</sup> In other words, Sobrino does not re-interpret radically the apocalyptic element of the reign of God in order to give a utopian goal to the social praxis. In this sense, the stress is given to Jesus' "social practice that would genuinely tend to the transformation of society in the direction of the utopia of the reign of God".<sup>118</sup> Here we have to point out two more things: i) Sobrino in fact does not believe that the reign of God as utopia can be realized in history.

The kingdom of God as a totality is a utopia realized in the risen Jesus but not in world history.<sup>119</sup> We call these principles 'utopian' because they cannot be adequately historicized, and because it is sometimes difficult to flesh them out in history at all.<sup>120</sup>

"Utopia is still *utopia* ('no place')", Sobrino argues, however, "Christianity cannot renounce utopia".<sup>121</sup> Therefore, for Sobrino the reign of God as a totality is

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<sup>117</sup>. J.Sobrino, "The Witness of the Church in Latin America", in *The Challenge of Basic Christian Communities* (New York: Orbis, 1981), eds. S.Torres & J.Eagleson, p. 186.

<sup>118</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), p. 123.

<sup>119</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, p. 65.

<sup>120</sup>. J.Sobrino, "The Witness of the Church in Latin America", p. 186.

<sup>121</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, p. 230.

just a utopian hope for future. But he does not discard the coming of the reign of God as Utopia, just because he believes that the reign of God as utopia supplies a final goal, therefore impetus to carry on historical liberation in the present. ii) Sobrino cannot combine adequately the reign of God as a totality and the historical praxis. The root of this problem lies in the relationship between the coming reign of God and Jesus' activity for it.

In view of the approaching reign, Jesus always demands something. Conceptually, it may sometimes be unclear whether he demands it precisely because the reign is approaching, or precisely to hasten its coming. ... There is no sharply logical relationship between, on the one hand, the reign of God and, on the other, Jesus' activity and the exigencies he addresses to his hearers.<sup>122</sup>

This problem has to do with the apocalyptic element of the reign of God which Sobrino keeps for liberating praxis in the form of utopian goal. This will be clear in our next issue.

Secondly, through the history of Jesus Sobrino tries to solve the issue of the continuity between the proclaimer and the proclaimed. The point of his attempt is that in the second stage 'Jesus' no longer expects the imminent arrival of the reign of God. In other words, Sobrino eliminates the apocalyptic element *in Jesus* which is the leading idea of Jesus' ministry in the first stage.

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<sup>122</sup>. J. Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation*, pp. 123-124.

Now the figure of Jesus is no more apocalyptic. Sobrino argues that Jesus asks us to follow his person and the way he chooses: "Discipleship now means following the concrete person of Jesus".<sup>123</sup> For Sobrino, this would mean that the change from 'faith of Jesus' to 'faith in Jesus' has been formed by the demand for Jesus during Jesus' life time. Next, "the demand of discipleship is no longer restricted to those disciples who are to preach the kingdom; it is now proposed to all as a way of life".<sup>124</sup> When Jesus becomes unsure as to whether the reign of God is coming, Sobrino argues, "one thing is clear: he requires an interior conversion on the part of all his hearers".<sup>125</sup> Jesus himself does not expect any apocalyptic intervention of God on the way to the cross and on the cross. In this manner, Sobrino de-apocalyptizes Jesus through the history of Jesus. But, as we have seen, Sobrino does *not* re-interpret radically the apocalyptic element involved in the conceptions of the reign of God. As we have pointed out, Sobrino retains it in the form of utopian hope which

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<sup>123</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, p. 361.

<sup>124</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 118. Italics added.

<sup>125</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation*, p. 123. Underline added: It does not mean that Sobrino stresses only on the inner conversion. Of course, Sobrino lays full stress on the social praxis, on the solidarity with the poor, and on the privileged locus of the oppressed, which are closely related with the human conversion. Our point here is that the figure of Jesus becomes un-apocalyptic.

will be fulfilled by God in the future, though he must know that the faith of Jesus and the conception of the reign of God cannot be separated. This explains why Sobrino cannot combine the historical liberation given by a de-apocalyptized Jesus and the salvation of reign of God as utopia to be realized by God at the end of history.

Thirdly, unlike Boff, Sobrino relates the demand of discipleship to the person of Jesus. Therefore, the following of Jesus does not mean to follow just a cause of Jesus' life, but "to reproduce his own way of life in oneself and one's life".<sup>126</sup> Therefore Sobrino connects the necessity of the discipleship (the liberating praxis) more strongly to Jesus than Boff does. We can approach how Sobrino understand the divinity of Jesus in connection to the discipleship. In Sobrino the divinity of Jesus is depicted in relational and functional terms rather than in terms of his own absolute nature. Sobrino argues that Jesus 'becomes' the Son of God rather than he 'is' the Son of God. The whole life of Jesus to the cross is nothing else but a questioning search for the true God. Jesus is the one and only way to God.<sup>127</sup> This means that God is present in the activity of Jesus and in Jesus. Accordingly, the 'discipleship' takes the most important role in having access to Jesus and therefore to God today.

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<sup>126</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, p. 115.

<sup>127</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 105, 204, 362.

It also can be the criterion of the true Christian faith. Jesus radically shows us how to encounter God through his life and death.

Bound up with the divinity of Jesus is the work of pointing out the way to the Father, facilitating it, and making sure that it can be traversed by others.<sup>128</sup>

Jesus is sure that God is with him. This is the faith of Jesus. "Jesus is the one who has lived faith in all its pristine fullness, who has opened up the path way of faith and traversed it to the very end".<sup>129</sup> In this sense, Jesus is the firstborn, and the first of the believers. Sobrino argues: "Hence being the 'firstborn' is part and parcel of Jesus' divinity. He traverses the way to God and makes it possible for his brothers and sisters to do the same".<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>129</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>130</sup>. *Ibid.*

### 3. The Conflict and Death of Jesus

#### 3.1. The View of Boff

The Conflict: Boff does not pay particular attention to the death of Jesus. He argues that Jesus' death is bound up with his life, his proclamation, and his practical activity. For Boff there are two motives for the death of Jesus, and both extend to the structural level--religious and political. Because the popular masses follow Jesus, Jesus becomes a danger for established order religiously and politically. Jesus unmasks the religious hypocrisy of the standing order and its use of God to justify injustice. Therefore, Jesus is condemned as a blasphemer religiously. On the other hand, Jesus' whole attitude and approach are eminently liberative. His prophetic criticism of the incumbents of political, economic and religious power provokes a conflict. Thus the political authorities accuse him of being a guerrilla fighter and execute him for that.<sup>131</sup>

Jesus' attitude and its meaning: Towards the end of his life, Jesus possesses a clear awareness of being a decisive factor in the breakthrough of the reign of God and of having a unique relationship with God. Jesus is conscious of being an instrument in the total coming of

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<sup>131</sup>. L.Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, pp. 100ff, 288.



the reign of God. Jesus takes into account the possibility of his violent death. He resolutely decides to go to Jerusalem and await the reign of God there.<sup>132</sup> However, he is confronted with the use of power. He chooses to die rather than to implant the reign of God by violence.<sup>133</sup> He rejects a political-religious messianism based on power. "With the cross, Jesus conquered the greatest temptation of his whole life, the temptation to use power as a means of enthroning the kingdom".<sup>134</sup> The expected reign of God has not arrived. In spite of his consciousness of failure, "he realized the will of the Father only on the cross".<sup>135</sup> The will of God means love. Boff argues; "Jesus bore witness to the real power of God: love. It is love that liberates human beings, establishes fellowship between them, and opens them up to the authentic process of liberation".<sup>136</sup>

### 3.2. The View of Sobrino

Sobrino stresses two theological aspects of the death of Jesus. Firstly, Sobrino thinks that the death of Jesus

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<sup>132</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 145, 113.

<sup>133</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 288.

<sup>134</sup>. L.Boff, "Salvation in Jesus Christ and the Process of Liberation", p. 86.

<sup>135</sup>. L.Boff, "Image of Jesus in Brazilian Liberal Christianity", p. 25.

<sup>136</sup>. L.Boff, "Christ's Liberation via Oppression", p. 120.

is the historical consequence and result of his life. Jesus is condemned to death as a blasphemer religiously and as a political agitator politically.<sup>137</sup> Theologically, Sobrino sees a historical conflict between Jesus and the persecutors as the conflict of the true divinity and false divinities; God is a living God and God gives life. Thus Jesus interprets the archetypal will of God as life. Therefore, the fulfilment of life is the prime mediation of the reality of God.<sup>138</sup> Giving life can be salvation, redemption and liberation. God, true divinity, has manifested itself in Jesus.<sup>139</sup> On the other hand, false divinities are not living and do not give life. They do not exist of themselves but have been created by humans. Human beings, who create false gods, become dehumanized and dehumanize others, and they themselves go to their death, and give death to others. Lack of life is caused by the free will of powerful minority groups who use their power for their own interests and against others. Jesus struggles resolutely against any type of social force that in one way or another dehumanizes human beings, causing their death.<sup>140</sup> Therefore Jesus concentrates on those areas where the life of individuals is most precarious, most

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<sup>137</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, pp. 205, 211.

<sup>138</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 102.

<sup>139</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>140</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 101.

threatened, or even nonexistent. "For that reason the program for his mission is one of partiality, and announces a God of partisan life to those who lack it on the most elementary levels".<sup>141</sup> In this context, the reign of God is nothing but full life in which everyone can participate. Jesus announces life to the poor and oppressed. This is good news to those who have it least. In this sense, the poor appear as its privileged recipients and the good news can be partial.

Religiously, the Pharisees incorrectly deal with the true will of God, because they located it in laws and traditions. The Pharisees believe that laws can be a mediation of the will of God, and that they can be mediators. They manipulate the true God in the name of a false deity.<sup>142</sup> Therefore, Jesus' understanding of a God of life comes into conflict with those who do not admit it because of their different conception of God, and of their established religious order. Sobrino argues that "the Pharisees refuse to accept the approach of the kingdom precisely by reason of their own partiality".<sup>143</sup> By presenting people with a God who stands in complete contradiction to the existing religious situation, Jesus

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<sup>141</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>142</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 105. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, p. 203.

<sup>143</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 90.

introduces conflict into the heart of his life.<sup>144</sup> This explains the end of Jesus; Sobrino concludes his understanding of Jesus' death;

The essential datum is that divinities are battling; their different mediations are battling; and hence their mediators, too, are battling.<sup>145</sup>

Secondly, Jesus has devoted his life entirely to proclaiming the God of life. Jesus has been faithful to be a mediator of true divinity. However, his death differs from that of other martyrs and prophets, for they die with the intention that their death should serve as their last act in defense of their cause. By contrast Jesus dies in total discontinuity with his life and his cause.<sup>146</sup> Jesus feels that he has been abandoned by God on the Cross. Therefore Sobrino raises the issue of problem of God--theodicy. We will deal with this issue from the situation of Latin America. We will see this in the connection of the resurrection of Jesus in the next section.

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<sup>144</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, pp. 207-208.

<sup>145</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 119.

<sup>146</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, p. 218.

#### 4. The Resurrection of Jesus and the Present Locus of Jesus

Boff argues that the followers of Jesus do not find immediately any salvific significance in the death of Jesus; because the very fact of being crucified means that Jesus is actually abandoned by God.<sup>147</sup> Therefore, Boff argues that the resurrection brings about a complete reversal in the apostles. But he does not think that the resurrection of Jesus is the revitalization of a cadaver.<sup>148</sup> Boff examines two facts in the accounts concerning the resurrection of Jesus: i) In the New Testament the empty sepulchre is not adduced as proof of the resurrection by any evangelist. The empty sepulchre means an invitation to faith.<sup>149</sup> ii) However, Boff thinks that the apparitions to the disciples are not subjective visions or products of the faith of the community. He argues that "the resurrection is not the theological creation of some enthusiastic follower of the person from Nazareth. Faith in the resurrection is the fruit of the impact on the apostles of the apparitions of the living

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<sup>147</sup>. L.Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>148</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 129, 122.

<sup>149</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 124f.

Lord".<sup>150</sup> Boff does not explain exactly what 'impact' means. But it is clear that Boff does not see the 'impact' as a historical fact: "the resurrection is not an ordinary historical fact capable of being grasped by historian. It is a fact grasped only by faith".<sup>151</sup> For Boff after the 'impact', the disciples come to realize that the reign of God is concretized in the life of Jesus, i.e. the maximum in self-giving takes place on the cross, where Jesus empties himself and loses his life for God and human beings.<sup>152</sup> God has not abandoned Jesus, rather he affirms the life and death of Jesus. Boff argues; "God's greatest communication is called resurrection. Hence we can say that Jesus' resurrection occurred at the moment of his death".<sup>153</sup> The resurrection is the realization of Jesus' announcement of total liberation. The risen one always speaks something:

The resurrection of the crucified Jesus shows that it is not meaningless to die for other human beings and God. ... The resurrection tells us that the murderer shall not triumph over victim.<sup>154</sup>

Jesus as spirit fills in all reality in the same way that God is present in all things. There are various ways

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<sup>150</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 128. Underline added.

<sup>151</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>152</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>153</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>154</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 291.

in which the risen Jesus is present within the reality we live. However, he is active in a special way in those who carry forward his cause.<sup>155</sup> "Jesus continues to exist among human beings, giving impetus to their struggle for liberation".<sup>156</sup> All who adhere to Jesus' cause, love, are his brothers and sisters.

Like Boff, Sobrino says that at first the disciples do not realize the salvific significance of the cross. For Sobrino the reason is simple, because the disciples could not see how they could relate Jesus to God, when God left him to die on the cross.<sup>157</sup> Sobrino also tries to identify the traditions concerning the resurrection of Jesus; i) Faith in risen Jesus does not depend on the existence of the empty tomb.<sup>158</sup> ii) All the accounts of Jesus' apparitions stress a mission. Jesus does not appear simply to show himself to people. His appearances are always bound up with a vocation to a mission.<sup>159</sup> iii) For Paul the resurrection means a radical change. Paul possesses a prior horizon of understanding for what has happened to Jesus. It is a 'hope'. With this Paul is

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<sup>155</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 207-209, 219.

<sup>156</sup>. *Ibid.*, p.291.

<sup>157</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, p. 265.

<sup>158</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 375.

<sup>159</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 255.

able to describe the Jesus-event as 'resurrection'.<sup>160</sup>

Now we return to the issue of the problem of God. Sobrino approaches this issue from practical experience of the situation of Latin America.

In the human race today--and certainly where I am writing--many woman and men, indeed entire peoples, are crucified. ... These crucified of history furnish the special lens through which we can grasp Jesus' resurrection "Christianly" and make a Christian presentation of it.<sup>161</sup>

Sobrino is sure that we cannot find an answer for the resurrection from metaphysical considerations--he means Greek epistemology based on analogy and wonder--in which the reality of God is to be recognized through what is positive in his creatures such as their beauty, order, intelligence, and so forth.<sup>162</sup> However, for those who are dying because of injustice the "crucial concern is whether God was with Jesus on the cross".<sup>163</sup>

On Jesus' cross, in a first moment, God's impotence appeared. Of itself this impotence is not the cause of hope. But it lends credibility to the power of God that will be shown in the resurrection. The reason for this is that God's impotence, God's helplessness, is the expression of God's absolute nearness to the poor, sharing their lot to the end. God was on Jesus' cross. God shared the horrors of history. Therefore God's action in the resurrection is credible, at least

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<sup>160</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 241-242.

<sup>161</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p.148.

<sup>162</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, pp. 198ff.

<sup>163</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 153.



for the one who has been crucified.<sup>164</sup>

Sobrino argues that on the cross of Jesus God himself is crucified. The Father suffers the death of the Son and takes upon himself all the pain and suffering of history.<sup>165</sup> This means that God has confirmed Jesus' concrete preaching and deed, including his 'death on the cross'.<sup>166</sup> This is the meaning of the resurrection which gives radical change to the followers of Jesus. This perspective leads to two further ones: First, the death of Jesus as such can be an actual mediation of God who really is. God is to be found in the crosses of the oppressed rather than in beauty, power or wisdom.<sup>167</sup> In this sense, Sobrino can argue that "in Latin America the concrete mediation of the 'death of God' has been the 'death of the other human being'".<sup>168</sup> Second, only the God who suffers can save us. This means 'hope'. "God has raised a crucified one, and from this moment forward there is hope

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<sup>164</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 224. Sobrino acknowledges that the 'crucified God' is a concept borrowed from J.Moltmann. When Sobrino regards 'hope' as the hermeneutical horizon for understanding the resurrection, his objective position and proposed solution of the hermeneutic problem derives basically from two books of Moltmann: *Theology of Hope* (London: SCM, 1967), and *The Crucified God* (London: SCM, 1974). Cf. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, p. 257 note 10.

<sup>166</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, p. 265.

<sup>167</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>168</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

for the crucified of history".<sup>169</sup> Universal hope for resurrection in which we put our hope in survival after death is not Christian hope. Christian hope can be real only through a praxis--the following of Jesus. When we follow Jesus in our life, Christian hope for resurrection is realized here and now. Sobrino argues that this truth is still being historically repeated.<sup>170</sup> "This is what it means to live as risen in the here and now. ... it is the following of Jesus. To live *already* as risen men and women is to retrace Jesus' route".<sup>171</sup> For them Jesus is already their Lord. "The present lordship of Jesus is shown in the fact that new men and women exist".<sup>172</sup>

Jesus is present in current history as spirit. "It is not a matter of just any spirit, but of Jesus' spirit".<sup>173</sup> Sobrino approaches again the issue of the continuity between 'faith of Jesus' and 'faith in Jesus'. Jesus appears both as the bearer of good news and good news itself. For us the good news also includes the mediator. "Jesus the mediator announces and initiates the *eu-aggelion* (the kingdom of God) and he himself is *eu-aggelion*, good news, because through his incarnation,

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<sup>169</sup>. *Ibid.*, J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 51.

<sup>170</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 152f, 158f.

<sup>171</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>172</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>173</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation*, p. 174.

death and resurrection God accomplishes the world's salvation".<sup>174</sup> The resurrection of Jesus in the New Testament cannot be a barrier to see the words and deeds of the historical Jesus as salvific. Rather it helps us to realize the real meaning of Jesus' life. It is one way of preaching the life and death of Jesus. In this context, Sobrino argues;

The resurrection is believed in and it functions as the ultimate horizon of the good news. But in the second place, this does not alter the fact that historically and existentially Jesus of Nazareth is grasped as good news in himself, even independently (logically) of his resurrection. And moreover, in my view, Jesus' life has more real weight than his resurrection for the grasping of what is good news in the faith.<sup>175</sup>

Sobrino argues that the mediator cannot be dissolved into his cause. Therefore, the following of Jesus is to go on promoting Jesus' cause and do it in the way that Jesus did.<sup>176</sup> For Sobrino discipleship means essentially to repeat Jesus' decision, to believe like Jesus, and to follow concretely the way of Jesus to the cross. For Sobrino 'faith in Jesus' is nothing but the following of Jesus who shows the presence of God in his life and death, thus, becomes the mediator between God and us.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>174</sup>. J.Sobrino, "Jesus, Theology, and Good News", in *The Future of Liberation Theology*, p. 195.

<sup>175</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>176</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup>. Cf. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, pp. 53-54.

Lastly, from Sobrino's experience we can understand that contemporary examples of the death-resurrection circle embodied in Jesus are happening continually in Latin America; when Sobrino and his friends lost other friends who died in following Jesus, they are first filled with indignation and grief. But they realize that the spirit of Jesus can conquer the power of death. This is the very meaning of the Christian Easter. The spirit of Jesus is always with us in pursuit of his cause. Sobrino confesses;

It was the first Christian Easter all over again. The horror, the abandonment, the solitude of Jesus' cross had driven the disciples to their refuge in the upper room. But Jesus' spirit was mightier than death .... Once more we witnessed the murder of the just, the innocent. ... The murdered Christ is here in the person of four *women*. ... Christ lies dead here among us. He is Maura, Ita, Dorothy, and Jean. But he is risen, too, in these same four women, and he keeps the hope of liberation alive. ... And yet, our last word must be: Thank you. In Maura, Ita, Dorothy, and Jean, God has visited El Salvador.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>178</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation*, pp. 154-156.

## 5. Conclusion

Boff and Sobrino theologize their experiences with the contact with the poor. They obtain an insight that ordinary people who follow Jesus have no need of processes of demythologization or sophisticated hermeneutics to identify the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith.<sup>179</sup> They see the presence of God in Jesus. The history of Jesus is the history of his faith. The faith of Jesus is his belief that the ultimate will of God is life and love. Jesus as the mediator shows us the will of God through his life. Today Jesus as spirit is in history. Everyone who follows the spirit of Jesus will know that Jesus is the way to God, that one can encounter God in Jesus, and then confess that Jesus is his Lord. The spirit of Jesus gives us strength to carry out his cause with joy and encourages us to overcome the power of death. Following Jesus can entail suffering. However, the opposite of joy is not suffering but sadness.<sup>180</sup> The followers of Jesus can have suffering and joy at the same time. This is their Christological contribution to prove from their experiences that when we *follow* Jesus we can confess that Jesus is Christ; "In Latin America today this following of

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<sup>179</sup>. Cf. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 162.

<sup>180</sup>. J.Sobrino, "Jesus, Theology, and Good News", p. 194.

Jesus, and therefore this faith in Christ, exist in large measure".<sup>181</sup>

Boff and Sobrino reject two histories, one profane and one sacred, whether they are juxtaposed or closely related.<sup>182</sup> Sobrino argues that "there is no longer any history but one".<sup>183</sup> Boff tries to put the transcendental realm into the immanent realm: "the world is the arena for the historical realization of the kingdom".<sup>184</sup> He can even show that economic and political dimensions have a theological element. But the problem of this traditional subject of the relationship between the two histories has not been solved by them. For Boff and Sobrino the two histories simply reappear in different forms: 'historical liberation' of human beings and 'total salvation' of Christ. As we have seen, they cannot combine them adequately in one sphere. Because Boff has a dual-structure concerning the reign of God; on the one hand, he retains the apocalyptic and future element of the reign of God for an utopian hope-- this becomes the final goal and hope for liberating praxis in the future. On the other hand, he takes one cause from the life of Jesus to connect

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<sup>181</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 164.

<sup>182</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 84., L.Boff, "Integral Liberation and Partial Liberation", p. 57.

<sup>183</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America*, p. 84.

<sup>184</sup>. L.Boff, *Church: Charism and Power* (London: SCM, 1989). p. 1.

the present social praxis and the ministry of Jesus. In a slightly different manner, Sobrino historicizes the message and figure of Jesus, and connects the historical liberation and the activities of Jesus. But he does not historicize the apocalyptic conception of the reign of God. This again becomes an utopian hope which will be fulfilled only by God. Therefore, they cannot demonstrate the relationship between the two, but just assert: "Salvation and liberation are without division and without separation, but they are also without confusion and without any change of one into the other".<sup>185</sup>

Finally, we will examine the precise meaning of "the poor are privileged", or "Jesus' partisan love for the poor".<sup>186</sup> We often meet this argument or a similar one in Boff and Sobrino. First they do not give positive value to material poverty itself. Poverty can be a dehumanizing power, and thus, should be eradicated. Therefore, these phrases never mean that they encourage the materially poor to be the poor continually. Rather, asking for solidarity with the poor (voluntary poverty) they put their whole strength to improve the unjust social structure which entails dehumanizing power. Next, they are not so naive to say that the poor are not sinners: "It [theology] does

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<sup>185</sup>. L.Boff, "Integral Liberation and Partial Liberation", p. 60.

<sup>186</sup>. For the basic definition of the 'poor' at the three levels, see this thesis p. 137 footnote 5.

not pretend not to see the failings and sins of the poor".<sup>187</sup> They acknowledge the universal character of sin, Jesus' offering of salvation of all, accordingly, Jesus' demanding conversion to all. The fundamental equality in the message of Jesus can be either an offence or good news according to one's *situation*, including socio-economical one. In other words, for certain individuals or groups it is easier (not easy) than other individuals or groups to accept the message of Jesus. This is the meaning of 'the poor are privileged'. Boff and Sobrino are prepared to admit that God can be encountered not in the persons of the oppressed, strictly speaking, but in the following of the cause of Jesus (radical conversion theologically): "God is present in those who are the historical sacrament of the Son, in those who suffer, are naked and hungry, but not just in their person, rather, fundamentally, in their struggles for justice, participation, and life".<sup>188</sup> However, when they argue for the following of Jesus, the figure of Jesus is in most cases fixed in 'the solidarity with the poor'. Consequently, the materially poor often appear as if they were already in the privileged place in which they no longer need conversion, or as if they were waiting for an other's solidarity with them. In other

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<sup>187</sup>. J.Sobrino, "Jesus, Theology, and Good News", p. 194.

<sup>188</sup>. L.Boff, "The Originality of the Theology of Liberation", in *The Future of Liberation Theology*, p. 43.



words, as Boff and Sobrino admitted, the materially poor and material poverty gave them a new perspective for Latin American Christologies. But in their Christologies, the materially poor are already in 'privileged' place, and the emphasis is laid to those who are not poor. The term 'solidarity with the poor' is primarily applied to those who are not poor. Therefore, wittingly or unwittingly, the more active role is given to those who are not materially poor, but those who can make a decision of the solidarity with the materially poor. It is the material poverty (the poor) who supplies the new perspective, but it is the voluntary poverty (those who can be in the solidarity with the poor) who has a central role in the theology of Boff and Sobrino. The reason is simple: in Boff and Sobrino, the most important foundation for the discipleship today originated from the fact that Jesus showed his partisan love to the materially poor. Of course, they argue that Jesus lived as one of the poor. But this does not mean that Jesus identified himself with them. This means that Jesus lived in solidarity with the poor. Therefore, in Boff and Sobrino, the materially poor look as if they were privileged, but in fact they are deprived of their subjectivity for their self-determination in history. We would say that in Boff and Sobrino, the role of the materially poor is weakened and alienated theologically and historically: Theologically the poor are not the subjects of radical conversion.

Historically the poor are not the subjects of history in their society and culture.

## CHAPTER IV. The Jesus-Event and Historical Messianic- Events: Jesus in Asian Culture

### Introduction

J.H. Cone, a black theologian, is quite right in saying; "The first thing that a non-Korean needs to understand about minjung theology is its uniqueness. It is a *Korean* theology defined by the culture and history of Korea. ....The second thing that a non-Korean needs to understand is that minjung theology is an *Asian* theology. This point is essential for non-Asians to understand. It is minjung theology's Asian identity that makes culture, including folklore, important in the structure and content of its discourse".<sup>1</sup> The key element to understand minjung theology must be a correct understanding of the word 'minjung', as the title "Minjung Theology" signifies. Minjung theology was formed in the 1970s. The word minjung, however, is not a new term created by minjung theologians. It has been in use for more than two thousand years in Asia.<sup>2</sup> 'Minjung' is also an important

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<sup>1</sup>. From the preface of *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History* (London: Zed Press), ed. CTC-CCA, pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>2</sup>. In this chapter, 'Asia' means Korea, China and Japan that shared ancient Chinese. And all Korean and Chinese names will be written with the surname first,

word in Confucianism, Buddhism and other Asian philosophies and religions. Therefore, the word has come to contain deep historical and cultural connotations in its history. It seems that minjung theologians have accepted important ideas already contained in 'minjung' before the birth of minjung theology. Therefore, there are many historical and cultural terminologies in their discussions, which can be understood only by those who understand Asian culture. Cone confesses that "my difficulty was with the language and the terms they used to express their theology".<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, most minjung theologians assert that Jesus is 'minjung' and *vice versa*. However they do not fully explain precisely how Jesus is 'minjung' and *vice versa*. There have been few systematic discussions and writings on Christology, since their primary interest does not lie in making Asian Christology but in creating minjung movements.

Therefore it is difficult to grasp the image of Jesus in Asia without an understanding of the historical and cultural usages of 'minjung' and its backgrounds. In section one, we will focus our investigation on tracing the meanings and connotations of the word minjung. In doing this, we will i) try to examine the basic

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except where the westernized form has become standard or better known--e.g. Mencius.

<sup>3</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

historical and cultural understandings concerning the minjung and also the terminologies used in minjung theology in general, ii) look at what has led to minjung theologians identifying Jesus and the minjung. In section two, we will look at the minjung theologian's view of history, which enables them to formulate minjung theology. In section three, the teaching, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus will be dealt with.

## 1. The Role of Minjung and Christianity in Asian Culture

'Minjung' is a combination of two Chinese characters, 'min' and 'jung'. 'Min' may be translated as people and 'jung' as the mass. Thus minjung means the mass of the people, or mass, or just the people. However, because the meanings of 'min' and 'jung' are very similar, often identical historically, in ancient documents all the words 'min', 'jung', 'min-jung', or 'jung-min' have been used often in the same meanings. We may point out just a tendency that 'min' appears in Confucian tradition more often, while 'jung' is favoured in Buddhist tradition. These words, any way, come to have deep connotations in the long historical process. Therefore most of the minjung theologians strongly argue that the word 'minjung' should not be translated. On the other hand Christianity was introduced into Korea between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century. The basic ideas of Christianity in Asia such as the 'Kingdom of God', the 'image of Jesus' and the Christian view of history cannot be understood properly without an understanding of the existing religions and the culture. Thus, our investigation will centre around tracing briefly the usages of 'min' or 'Jung' in various documents.

### 1.1. Basic ideas of minjung centring on Confucianism and the spread of Catholicism

There was a tradition from ancient times that sovereign power does not depend on a King but on the people. Of course, it was believed that a King was gifted by Heaven to rule over the people. However, it was also true that the King could be replaced by the people, if he was against the will of People. John B. Noss' understanding is correct that: "The casual reader of Chinese history and folklore might too easily conclude that imperial authority in times past was absolute and uncontrolled, and that the emperor had no wishes to consult save his own. But this impression, however well supported by tales of imperial extravagance and arbitrary rule, would be wide of the mark. ... He was never entirely comfortable; he lived in the uneasy knowledge that his people held him strictly accountable for any failure to live by the celestial mandate, for if he did less he endangered the prosperity of the realm. If he failed to carry out the divine mandate and become licentious, lazy, and careless, calamity befell the nation as a sign of celestial displeasure, and the people had the right to revolt and depose their ruler. In such case Heaven guided some rebel to the throne who was more

amenable to its will".<sup>4</sup>

This idea is well expressed by Mencius (371-289 B.C.). He argues that if a ruler lacks the qualities that makes a good leader the people have the moral right of revolution. In that case, even the killing of the ruler is no longer a crime of regicide. This is because if a sovereign does not act as he ideally ought to do, he ceases to be a sovereign and is a 'mere fellow'.

King Hsüan of Ch'i asked, 'Is it true that T'ang banished Chieh and King Wu marched against Tchou?'

'It is so recorded,' answered Mencius.

'Is regicide permissible?'

'A man who mutilates benevolence is a mutilator, while one who cripples rightness is a crippler. He who is both a mutilator and a crippler is an "outcast". I have indeed heard of the punishment of the "outcast Tchou", but I have not heard of any regicide'.<sup>5</sup>

This political view of Mencius is based on his view of the people; the politics of a sovereign should be 'for' the people, since the role of the people is more important than that of a king in a state. Mencius uses the word 'min':

The min are of supreme importance; the altars to the gods of earth and grain come next; last comes the ruler. That is why he who gains the confidence of the min will be Emperor; he who gains the confidence of a

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<sup>4</sup>. John B. Noss, *Man's Religions* (London; Macmillan, 1969), 4th ed., pp. 251-252.

<sup>5</sup>. Mencius, *The Book of Mencius* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), Book I. part B/8, p. 68.



feudal lord will be a counsellor.<sup>6</sup>

Fung, a Chinese scholar of philosophy, argues that "these ideas of Mencius have exercised a tremendous influence in Chinese history, even as late as the revolution of 1911, which led to the establishment of the Chinese Republic".<sup>7</sup> To be sure, there has been different views to the political thought of Mencius. Some scholars have evaluated that Mencius' idea of 'min' remained at the elementary stage. This means that Mencius claimed that something had to be done for the min; but he did not develop a politics of and by the min. Therefore, Mencius' ideas is not primarily applied to the people in order to extend the people's rights positively, but to the purpose of warning rulers.<sup>8</sup> However we can take at least two points from Mencius; i) The roots of a state rely on the minjung. ii) Accordingly, the power of a sovereign is not absolute; his power also depends on the will of the minjung. This is the most basic idea which the term minjung contains.

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<sup>6</sup>. Cf. *Ibid.*, Book Vii part B/14, p. 196. Underline added.

<sup>7</sup>. Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Free Press, 1948), ed. D.Bodde, p. 74.

<sup>8</sup>. Joe Gwang, "A Study of Chong Yag-Yong's Consciousness of the People's Rights", in *Essays on Minjung* (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 1984), ed. Korea Theological Study Institute, pp. 317 ff.

The conception of the minjung has a new connotation in Chong To-Jon.<sup>9</sup>

A sovereign depends on a state; a state depends on the min; [so] the min are the foundation of the state and also of Chen [heaven] of the sovereign. According to the rites of Chu, the sovereign bows when he receives the census of the min, because Heaven is so important.<sup>10</sup>

It seems that for Chong, 'min' means ordinary people. The remarkable point is that Chong identifies 'min' with 'Heaven'. In Asia there are mainly three titles to indicate gods; *Chen* (Heaven), *Chen-Ju* (Heaven's Lord) and *Shang-Je* (Upper Ruler). *Chen* is the most basic and popular of the three titles. The identification of the min and Heaven can be interpreted as follows; firstly that the min have divine character, and secondly that there is no sharp distinction between man and God. We would argue that the latter idea has been more influential on the mind of Asians. Today the identification of man and Heaven is so natural that they have a proverb-- 'the will of the min is the will of Heaven'. Because these three titles

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<sup>9</sup>. Chong To-Jon(? -1398) was a Neo-confucianist at the end of Koryo dynasty in Korea. Neo-confucianism is a philosophical Confucianism that explains the origins of man and the universe in metaphysical terms. Cf. Lee Ki-Baik, *A New History of Korea* (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1984), pp. 166f. *A Dictionary of Philosophy* (Seoul: I-Sac Press), ed. I-Sac Books, pp. 330ff.

<sup>10</sup>. Chong To-Jon, *Sam-Bong Jib*, vol.7, quoted in Joe Dong-il, "Minjung, Minjung Consciousness and Minjung Art", in *Essays on Minjung*, p. 111. Underline added.

were very popular, when Christianity was introduced into Asia, these titles were used to indicate Christian deities; for instance, 'Catholicism' was translated as Chen-Ju religion, and God as Chen-Ju or Shang-Je in Korea and China. For the title 'God' Protestantism in China accepted 'Shang-Je'. Both Catholicism and Protestantism in Japan use 'Ga-mi', which is Japanese pronunciation of a Chinese character for 'god' (神). 'Ga-mi' in China, Japan and Korea is a very general term for any god. Every deity in shamanism, Confucianism, Buddhism and so on, can be called as 'Ga-mi'. Protestantism in Korea just added a suffix 'nim' to the word for Heaven to show honour.<sup>11</sup> 'Nim' is a very popular suffix used in the case of teachers, ministers, and others whom the speaker wishes to offer respect. As a result, the word 'God' of the Bible was not a new term for Asians, it had been used for a long time as a familiar word; so familiar and warm that it had been identified with min.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, theologically

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<sup>11</sup>. For Protestantism 'Hanu-nim' (Heaven-Nim) becomes the official term for God today without difficulty. But for Catholicism the term for God has been controversial, since the conservative line believes that 'Chen-Ju' cannot give clear distinction to God of Christianity. However, the Catholic Committee for Terminologies (convenor, bishop Kim Ok-Keun) has decided at July 1991 that both 'Hanu-nim' and 'Chen-ju' are the official terms for God. "Announcement of Catholic Committee for Terminologies", *Dong-A Daily Newspaper* (Seoul), 29 November 1991, p. 12.

<sup>12</sup>. This is true even today. In the middle of 1980s, there were serious demonstrations of students against the dictatorship. Once I was invited to a Bible study group for university students, and asked to speak on Romans 13:1. I prepared my presentation based on K.Barth's *The Epistle to the Romans*. I thought that it was a good idea

speaking, God may not be a 'wholly other' in Asian culture, since there has been no qualitative gap between God and human beings. In this sense, we may understand why most of the minjung theologians say without full explanations that 'Jesus is the minjung'. We will look at this argument in detail later.

In the seventeenth century the word Min came to contain a different conception, i.e. the class conception. The greatest change in the field of literature in the seventeenth century was the outpouring of works written in Korean. It was not only that the words themselves were put into Korean but there were changes in form as well, towards such genre as the novel and the long narrative poem. Ho Kyun (1569-1618) wrote *Hong Kiltong Cheon* which is considered to be the first vernacular novel. It is a work of social criticism that scathingly attacked the inequities of society of that time with its discriminatory treatment of illegitimate offspring and its differences

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to connect Romans 13:1 to 12:21; We do not have to submit ourselves to the 'governing authority' if they are evil. Rather we have to overcome evil with good. But the response of the students was quite different. The point of their argument is that the 'governing authority' ('Upper Ruler' in Korean Bible, let us remember that Upper Ruler means Shang-Je) must signify Shang-Je. Because Shang-Je, or Heaven is the min, Romans 13:1 should be interpreted that 'everyone must submit himself to the min, for the will of the min is established by God; the will of the min is the will of God'. Cf. K. Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Oxford: University Press, 1953), pp. 475ff.

based on wealth.<sup>13</sup> The plot is as follows: The alienated social hero Hong Kiltong gains victory against the government. However he leaves the country with his followers and goes off to an island to establish an ideal society. This has been the most favourite novel among minjung theologians. Kim Yong-Bock regards this novel as a messianic tradition in Korea.<sup>14</sup>

Along with many novels, Ho kyun wrote *Ho-min doctrine*. In *Ho-min doctrine*, he divides the minjung into three categories; i) Hang-Min : The stupid minjung belong to this group. They do not know what their rights are. They have no critical consciousness. Therefore they become useful objects of exploitation and oppression for the ruling class. ii) Weon-Min: they have in common with Hang-Min the fact that they belong to the lower class. The difference is that they realize that they are being exploited and oppressed. They feel that they have to resist against the oppressors, but they cannot convert their thoughts into action. iii) Ho-Min: They understand the root of the problems. They accept the calling of their times to change society for others. It is they who are qualified for the organization and for leadership. In *Ho-Min doctrine*, Ho Kyun says that the minjung look as if they are impotent and ignorant, but when a critical time

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<sup>13</sup>. Lee Ki-Baik, *Op. cit.*, pp. 244.

<sup>14</sup>. Kim Yong-Bock, "Messiah and Minjung" in *Minjung Theology*, p. 138.

comes, when Ho-Min appear, the minjung rise suddenly to change the unjust social structure. Hong Kiltong in his novel can be an ideal model of Ho-Min.<sup>15</sup>

There are two noteworthy points from Ho Kyun; Firstly, 'minjung' can indicate a particular class or group opposing the ruling classes. Secondly, there can be several inner categories among the minjung according to their levels of consciousness. However, this does not necessarily mean that the conception of the minjung as ordinary people has been changed in the seventeenth century. This signifies that 'minjung' can have different connotations in the different context.

Catholicism was first contacted by Sirhak scholars in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. We will briefly look at the social background of the seventeenth and eighteenth century and the birth of the Sirhak School. It is certain that the formation of earliest traditions of Catholicism had to do with its social backdrop, and the first form of Catholicism might be influenced by Sirhak thinkers.

Political power came to be monopolized in the seventeenth and eighteenth century by the aristocratic class. In the countryside, while some peasants emerged and grew rich through the practice of an enlarged scale of

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<sup>15</sup>. Lee Lee-Wha, "Ho Kyun's View on Ho-Min", in *Essays on Minjung*, pp. 275-288.

farming, poor peasants were being forced to abandon their farms, and the number of landless vagrants increased. In urban areas too, a variety of changes were underway as wholesale merchants amassed wealth through their control of trade and handcraft production, while small merchants faced ruin and prices soared. As the numerous social ills attendant upon these phenomena became more grave, the problems which society during the Yi dynasty of Korea now faced demanded serious reflection on the part of the members of its educated class. Their response is embodied in the scholarship and thought known today as Sirhak (Practical Learning). The birth of Sirhak, therefore, ensured censure of those who held political power, and also showed an intent to bring about changes in the political and social order. The major concern of the Sirhak scholars was to illuminate the history and contemporary workings of political, economic, and social institutions.<sup>16</sup> First preparing the ground by painstaking scholarly inquiries, they proceeded to elaborate their visions of how an ideal society might be achieved. By no means limiting their scholarship to fields of social science, such as politics and economics, they extended their inquiries to embrace many other areas-- classical studies, historiography, geography, natural science,

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<sup>16</sup>.Lee Ki-Baik, *Op.cit.*, pp. 232-238.



agriculture, and many more.<sup>17</sup> Although the objects of their study were diverse, there was a common ground in which all Sirhak Scholars stood. Namely, the point of departure for their studies was the actual manifestation of things, their reality. They sought always for explicit verification. No conclusion could be reached unless it was substantiated by certain facts. Therefore they were in no way inclined to follow past tradition blindly or to accept unchallenged the views of their predecessors. The realities with which they were concerned, of course, were precisely those confronting their society in their time, so that their thought inevitably had a Korea-centric thrust to it.<sup>18</sup>

A new understanding for 'minjung' can be sought in the works of Chong Yag-Yong (1762-1876),<sup>19</sup> who was a

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<sup>17</sup>. Catholicism, known as 'Western Learning', came to Korea in the early stages of the transmission of Western culture which was first introduced to Korea through European Jesuit missionaries residing in Ming China. It was the Sirhak thinkers who initially took an interest in the new religion. Already in the reign of Kwanghaegun (1608-1623), Yi Su-Gwang made reference to Matteo Ricci's "True Principles of Catholicism" in his works. Later Sirhak scholars such as Yi Ik and Ahn Chong-Bok also were curious about Catholicism and discussed it in their writings. Cf. Lee Ki-Baik, *A New History of Korea*, p. 239. Min Kyung-Bae, *Church History of Korea* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1973), pp. 49ff.

<sup>18</sup>. Lee Ki-Baik, *Op.cit.*, pp. 232ff. Han Woo-Keum, *The History of Korea*, pp. 324ff.

<sup>19</sup>. While living in banishment for eighteen years and forced retirement for seventeen more as a result of the Catholic persecution of 1801, Chong wrote many works in which he analyzed and criticized the conditions of Yi



representative of the Sirhak school. The foundation of his thought concerning the minjung lies in that the minjung are the "subjects" of history politically and economically. In connecting the minjung to Heaven, Chong denies that there are different grades of people, some of whom have the right to govern the minjung.

There is heaven above; there are only the minjung under Heaven. Heaven is not interested whether a person's social status belongs to the ruling class or to the minjung.<sup>20</sup>

Chong objects to the political system of his time in which a sovereign has his power transmitted by heredity. He argues that the minjung have a right to choose their sovereigns. He understands the minjung as the root and the subject in their society.

Where does a sovereign come? From Heaven like rain? From earth like a pond? Five houses constitute a village; a representative of five houses becomes a leader of the village. Five villages constitute a town; five leaders of the villages choose the leader

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dynasty society on the basis of his personal experiences and investigations. He is judged to be the greatest name amongst Sirhak Scholars. In his "Design for Good Government" he put forth his views on government structures, in "Admonitions on Governing the People" he proposed reforms in local administration, and in "Toward a New Jurisprudence" he offered his ideas on penal administration. In other works as well, such as "Outline of Ideal Government" and "Treatise on Land", he further revealed his thinking on reforming the land system. Cf. Lee Ki-Baik, *Op.cit.*, pp. 234ff.

<sup>20</sup>.Chong Yag-Yong, *Ie-yu Dang Jeon Jib*, quoted in Joe Kwang, *Op.cit.*, p. 305. Underline added.

of the town.... The leaders of cities select a sovereign. Therefore, a sovereign is made by the minjung. Every sovereign comes from the minjung without exception.<sup>21</sup>

He criticizes the existing land system by which, in his expression, five persons have the land while ninety five persons are the tenant farmers. He approaches a solution of the problem of the farming village, by focusing his attention not on the landlord class but on those who actually cultivate the soil. He urges the adoption of a 'village land system' whereby land would be owned and tilled in common by each village unit, and the harvest then apportioned on the basis of the labour actually performed by each individual. His objective was to create a utopian state of independent, self-employed farmers who themselves held and tilled their lands.<sup>22</sup> Here Chong has noticed that the 'minjung' do not appear as the objects of economics and politics, but they are grasped as the subjects based on the people's rights.<sup>23</sup> This conception of 'minjung' takes a very important role in forming the view of history of minjung theologians. This idea becomes a slogan of minjung theology that "the

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<sup>21</sup>. Quoted, *Ibid.*, pp. 307-309. Underline added.

<sup>22</sup>. Lee Ki-baik, *Op. cit.*, pp. 234ff.

<sup>23</sup>. Joe Kwang, *Op.cit.*, p. 339.

minjung are the subjects of history".<sup>24</sup>

Regarding the spread of Catholicism we will limit our investigation mainly on two points which are closely related to each other; firstly, Catholicism in its early stages had political aspects; secondly, most of the believers were the minjung. The archbishop of Seoul gives us an excellent summary of the 'history of Catholic Church in Korea';

The history of Catholic Church in Korea has glorious prides and joys which are unique and cannot be found in any other countries; because the true and proper Catholic church was founded only by our ancestors without any help and teaching of foreign missionary [1784]; because a Chinese priest [the first foreign priest] came to Korea after ten-year's invitation of Korean Christians [1795]; because the Vatican [Pope Gregory XVI] approved the Korean Church as an independent parish [1831], though the Korean church had no priest;<sup>25</sup> because they kept their faith without a priest for sixty years caused by four great persecutions lasting one hundred years [c.a.1801- ]; because with the Gospel of love and peace they became pioneers of democracy against existing social classes of their time. ...The glorious development of the

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<sup>24</sup>. The subtitle of the only English version out of minjung theology books (a collection of ten essays from eight theologians) is 'people as the subjects of History.' Cf. *Minjung Theology: People as the subjects of History*.

<sup>25</sup>. Following quotation will help us to understand the situation more clearly; "These elected from amongst themselves a bishop and priests, who administered the Christian sacraments, and after the lapse of two or three years they opened communication with the Roman missionaries in Peking and asked to have a priest sent them. The first sent was a Chinese named Tsiou, who lived in disguise for seven years, till 1801, when he was put to death by the authorities." Charles Henry Robinson, *History of Christian Missions* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1915), p. 248.

Catholic Church in Korea is due to the blood of innumerable martyrs, names known and unknown. Truly, Sanguis Martyrum Semen Christianorum....<sup>26</sup>

It is noteworthy that Catholicism was introduced to Korea not by foreign missionaries but by Koreans; "...there can be no doubt that the seeds of Christianity were introduced into Corea [Korea] by purely native agency, and that they germinated in a soil which was destined to produce thenceforward a perennial harvest of believers, who have not hesitated in countless instances to seal their convictions with their blood".<sup>27</sup> As we have seen, several Sirhak scholars began to translate basic Catholic books and to discuss them from 1610s.<sup>28</sup> They were eager to change the existing social order and to achieve an ideal society. They believed that Catholicism could offer a strong impetus for a new society. Therefore, their interests in Catholicism were neither simple curiosity nor pure belief in the new religion, but

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<sup>26</sup>. Archbishop Nho, 'Recommendation Words' in Yue Hong-Youl, *A History of Korean Catholic Church*, vol.I, (Seoul: Catholic Press, 1989), pp. iii-iv.

<sup>27</sup>. *The Edinburgh Review*, Oct. 1872, vol. 136, no. 278, p. 304.

<sup>28</sup>. For example, *True Principles of Catholicism* by Matteo Ricci and some treatises such as *First Steps in Catholic Doctrine*, Christians, Sok-Yi Dam. Yi Ik, a leading scholar of Sirhak, compared *True Principles of Catholicism* and Confucianism and Buddhism. He argued that there was no basic difference between these religions including the doctrine of God. Cf. Min Kyung-Bae, *Op.cit.*, pp. 49ff.

political. The following quotation well explains why Sirhak thinkers were interested in, and introduced Catholicism;

What they sought in Catholicism was the means to correct the distortions in the social and political order caused by the concentration of political authority in the hands of a few powerful families. In an age beset by a host of social ills brought on by the oppression of the weak and the unbridled pursuit of personal gain by powerful families, wealthy farmers and rich merchants, the Catholic doctrine of original sin, so unlike the dominant orthodoxy of Neo-confucianism, evoked a warm response from many out-of-power scholars critical of the existing order. One can well imagine that those reform-minded Sirhak thinkers, desperately searching for ways to improve the dismal conditions surrounding them, took fresh hope for creating a heavenly kingdom on earth through belief in the new religion.<sup>29</sup>

Accordingly the acceptance of Catholicism constituted a kind of challenge to the oligarchic nature of aristocratic society and to the intellectual rigidity of the dominant religion of that time, i.e. Neo-Confucianist orthodoxy. Christians in the early stages did not accept Catholicism as a purely religious pursuit separated from their social activities. It was closely linked to their socio-political visions. In this context, we may say that Catholicism had political colour.

At the end of eighteenth century Catholicism was welcomed mainly by the minjung who were dissatisfied with the status quo of the social structure and were expecting

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<sup>29</sup>. Lee Ki-Baik, *Op.cit.*, p. 239.

a new society. As the numbers of believers increased, the government had designated Catholicism as a heresy and proscribed it in 1785. In the next year the importation of Catholic books of any kind from Peking was banned. However, Catholicism spread quickly to the minjung, and the character of their meetings and activities was often opposed to existing social ethic and to the ruling system. The persecutions began from 1791 and lasted about one hundred years.<sup>30</sup> A British church historian says: "It is doubtful whether any Christians in the old Roman Empire suffered as did the Korean Christians during the first seventy years of the nineteenth century".<sup>31</sup> To understand how severe the persecutions were, it is enough to consider the fact that in single persecution more than eight thousand Christians were put to death;

It was reckoned that in 1866 there were 25,000 Christians [Catholicism]. But in that year the worst of all the persecutions, political rather than strictly religious in character, broke out; two bishops, seven priests, and at least eight thousand

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<sup>30</sup>. The issue that brought to the surface Catholicism's challenge to the existing order, and which shook Yi society, was the so-called Rites controversy. This arose in consequence of a papal ruling in 1742 that ancestor worship and belief in Catholicism were incompatible. However, most of the severe persecutions happened in connection with political events. One of the worst persecutions, for example, followed after Christians were caught plotting against the government (1801). On the other hand, of course, we acknowledge that there were many martyrs who willingly walked the way of death for purely religious reasons. Cf. Lee Ki-Baik, *Op.cit.*, p. 240. Min Kyung-Bae, *Op.cit.*, pp. 63ff.

<sup>31</sup>. Charles Henry Robinson, *Op.cit.*, pp. 248-249.



Koreans perished.<sup>32</sup>

Stephen Neil judges that "the Roman Catholic Church has never quite recovered from the blow, and its adherents today represent only a rather small minority of the Christian population of the country".<sup>33</sup> However his judgement turns out to be wrong. The Catholic Church has survived the long and bitter persecutions. It is very natural that the Catholic Church, having survived the persecutions, has come to have an even stronger identity, and plays an important role in society. Today the Catholic Church has more than one million members and has taken root deeply in the minds of people and in society. On his visit to Korea in 1984, the Pope, John Paul II, canonized one hundred and three persons as saints, who had been put to death in the nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>. Stephen Neil, *A History of Christian Missions, The Pelican History of Church*, 1982, vol.6, p. 415. However, the numbers of the persecuted are still controversial. Cf. Min Kyung-Bae, *Op. cit.*, pp. 85ff. Allen D. Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea), pp. 7ff.

<sup>33</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup>. Out of one hundred and three persons very few belong to upper class. This also supports the contention that Catholicism was rooted and maintained by the minjung in the nineteenth century. Cf. Pak Nho-Yeon, *The Biographies of 103 Saints* (Seoul: Uyl-Gie Press, 1990). Kim Ok-Hee, *The Christian Community in the Times of Persecutions* (Seoul: Kesung Press, 1986).

## 1.2. Tonghak and Protestantism

If it was Catholicism that propagated its faith initially in the region of the capital, then it was Tonghak that was nurtured among the people of the farming villages. The grievances of the peasants against the society in which they lived found expression in a religious movement called Tonghak. Tonghak began to be propounded by its founder, Choe Che-U (1824-1864). Choe asserted that he had taken the best precepts of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, so as to oppose Catholicism (Western Learning) with Tonghak (Eastern Learning).<sup>35</sup>

Tonghak was not simply a religious movement but a social movement as well, one concerned primarily with the peasantry and the betterment of the conditions in which the villagers lived. Tonghak urged that the nation be strengthened and the livelihood of the minjung be ensured, and it called for reform of the corruption ridden government. Moreover, Tonghak went on to assert that the turning wheel of time had brought near the day when these goals might be achieved. After the execution in 1864 of its founder Choe, the Tonghak movement for a time could

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<sup>35</sup>. Hong Jang-Wha, ed., *A History of Tonghak Religion Movement* (Seoul: Tonghak Religion Press, 1991), p. 10. Lee Ki-Baik, *Op. Cit.*, p. 258.



not operate in the open. But under its second patriarch, Choe Si-Hyung (1829-1898), despite great difficulties, the *Bible of Tonghak Doctrine* and *Hymns from Dragon Pool* were compiled, thus systematizing the tenets of the new religion.<sup>36</sup>

In 1894, the expanded, well organized Tonghak movement erupted into a revolutionary peasant struggle employing military operations on a large scale. We also see the word 'min' in their Declaration; "The min are the root of the nation. If the root withers the nation will be enfeebled".<sup>37</sup> Chon Pong-Jun, the leader of this movement, assumed overall command and on his banner in large letters inscribed the exhortation to "sustain the nation and provide for the min".<sup>38</sup> Convinced now that the Tonghak must be appeased by whatever means, and its army of peasants dispersed, the government proposed that a truce be negotiated. The Tonghak demands in this regard were made in a formal document of twelve items. The contents can be summarized largely in two ideas: Firstly, that the aristocrats be prevented from draining the life blood of the minjung by their illegal extortions; secondly, that the government block the inroads of foreign

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<sup>36</sup>. Lee Ki-Baik, *Op. cit.*, pp. 258, 283.

<sup>37</sup>. Hong Jang-Wha, *Op. cit.*, p. 125.

<sup>38</sup>. Lee Ki-Baik, *Op. cit.*, p. 285. Underline added.

merchants.<sup>39</sup> The Tonghak rebellion was a widespread revolutionary movement of the minjung against the oppressive aristocratic society. At the same time, it also was a struggle against the economic aggression of the Japanese. Unable to suppress the struggle of the Tonghak peasant army with its own forces, the government had requested assistance from China. China dispatched a force of three thousand men. Japan also landed a large force of seven thousand troops backed by seven warships. The Tonghak peasant army lacked the strength to confront successfully the modern weapons and training of the Japanese troops. In the end, struggle as they might against the aristocratic power structure within and the aggressive forces of foreign imperialism from abroad, the Tonghak peasant soldiers were caught in a vice between the two and were crushed. More than three hundred thousand of the Tonghak soldiers were killed in this movement.<sup>40</sup>

The authorities attempted to exterminate the sect of Tonghak and refused to recognize it as a genuine religion, but it continued to spread nevertheless. Its name was changed to 'Chondogyo' (Religion of the Heavenly Way), and it developed many social institutions of its own. Several schools were founded and a newspaper was established

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<sup>39</sup>. *Ibid.* Han Woo-Keum, *Op.cit.*, p. 409.

<sup>40</sup>. Lee Ki-Baik, *Op. cit.*, pp. 287ff. Hong Jang-Wha, *Op. cit.*, p. 130.

specifically to attack the Japanese. By 1910 the Sect claimed three thousand believers.<sup>41</sup>

Tonghak religion (Chondogyo), which accepted the tradition of oriental philosophies such as Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, born as it was with the minjung in their sufferings, has influenced the spirituality of Koreans and minjung theologians as well. We have to examine at least two points from Tonghak, which are indispensable to an understanding of minjung theology.

The doctrine of God: The essence of the doctrine of God can be seen in their catchword that 'man is God'. They believe that mankind and the supreme being are one and the same. The will or spirit of man is a replica of that of God. Therefore serving man constitutes service to God. The doctrine says that "those who do not serve a visible human being cannot serve invisible God".<sup>42</sup> They do not think of God as separate from men. God is not far away; he can be experienced in each person. Accordingly only those who serve man as God can encounter God, at the same time, paradoxically, God exists in 'them' when they see man as God. To believe in God is nothing but to know

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<sup>41</sup>. Han Woo-Keum, *Op. cit.*, p. 458.

<sup>42</sup>. Hong Jang-Wha, *Op. cit.*, p. 97.

that "everybody can receive [have] God in himself".<sup>43</sup> They call this 'receiving God'. They argue that their conception of God is not pantheism nor monotheism; there is no gap between transcendence and immanence. God is transcendental but at the same time immanent.<sup>44</sup> According to Tonghak religion, "[in other religions] there have been tendencies that God is high, and man is less important. Human beings are regarded as servants of God; they are treated as sinners and their dignity is trampled; they are regarded as instruments of God, who should achieve the purpose and glory of God in the world.... The point of Tonghak religion's humanism lies in divinizing the human dignity by internalizing divinity in each person".<sup>45</sup> They lay stress on the fundamental equality of human beings. They argue; man is fundamentally equal not because man is equal 'before' God, but because man 'is' God.<sup>46</sup>

The Second Apocalypse: According to Tonghak religion, history can be divided into two periods; the first is the period which is already passed, called 'before heaven', the second is the period which is coming called, 'after

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<sup>43</sup>. Hong Jang-Wha, ed., *Tenet and Thought of Tonghak Religion* (Seoul: Tonghak Religion Press, 1991). pp. 12, 24ff.

<sup>44</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>45</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>46</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 51ff.

heaven', i.e. the Second Apocalypse. The Second Apocalypse means that the old period has gone, and new world is opening. Therefore the Second Apocalypse does not mean the end of history, but fundamental newness in history. This indicates a radical change of human mentality and re-creation of culture. As we have seen, the Tonghak movement was a wide spread revolutionary movement of the peasantry. "Cohesion and direction were given to the movement by the Tonghak religion".<sup>47</sup> Strictly speaking, the idea of the Second Apocalypse gave the impetus and direction to the Tonghak movement. Chon, the leader of the movement, believed that the Second Apocalypse had already come in the Tonghak Movement.<sup>48</sup>

The contents of the Second Apocalypse are categorized by three kinds of apocalypse; i) Apocalypse of Spirit-- This is applied to human mentality. Human beings should liberate themselves from subordination to God, power and mammon so as to recover the original nature of humanity. ii) Apocalypse of Society-- political and economic equality should be achieved. iii) Apocalypse of Nation-- World peace can be guaranteed by understanding and admitting that each different nation has its own different traditions, and each is unique. Therefore each nation

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<sup>47</sup>. Lee Ki-Baik, *Op. cit.*, p. 288.

<sup>48</sup>. Hong Jang-Wha, *Tenet and Thought of Tonghak Religion*, p. 59.

should give up imperialism and respect one another.<sup>49</sup>

Various views have been argued concerning the spread of Protestantism. Here we will pay special attention i) to the social situation into which Protestantism was introduced, and ii) to the role of Christians in social movements. Because Protestantism has only about one hundred year history, the early traditions formed in this unique situation were bound to play an important role in the development of Protestantism. Namely, Protestantism accepted by the minjung had political aspects from the beginning. Minjung theologians see that this tradition is the base on which they stand. This view may be true as far as the early stages of Protestantism are concerned. It is officially accepted that the beginning of Protestant mission work dated from 1884, when Dr. H.N. Allan, a medical missionary of the Presbyterian Mission Board, arrived in Korea from China. Several years before this, however, the Bible was translated into Korean and the first Protestant Church was built without any help from foreign missionaries.<sup>50</sup> After the middle of the eighteenth century, the Korean government was in the worst possible national financial and political crisis. The people were in great distress and suffered with poverty and illness.

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<sup>49</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-70.

<sup>50</sup>. Cf. Min Kyung-Bae, *Op. cit.*, pp. 105ff.

There were many revolts of the people. China and Japan were waiting for an opportunity to invade Korea. Most of all Korea was being swayed by strong disturbances, which resulted in the Tonghak movement ten years later. A Church historian Choo comments;

In this situation, Christianity [Protestantism] was accepted by the Korean people in fighting for justice, equality, and human rights. American Christianity, which was a blend of pietism, evangelism, and conservatism, and was non-political in its orientation, planted itself in Korea. It should be noted, however, that the Korean people made that Christianity a politically oriented one. Christianity in Korea was a religion of hope and power for the oppressed and suffering people. American Christianity was contextualized in Korea.<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, some historians assume that after the failure of Tonghak movement, many Tonghak believers became Protestants.<sup>52</sup>

Korea was invaded and colonized by Japan (1910), and this lasted until the end of World War II (1945). For Korea, it was the first colonization in her five thousand year history. In 1919, the March First Independent movement began with promulgation of the Declaration of Independence framed by the thirty three representatives of

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<sup>51</sup>. Choo Chai-Yong, "A Brief Sketch of Korean Christian History", in *Minjung Theology*, p. 76.

<sup>52</sup>. Cf. Choo Chai-Yong, "The Korean Minjung and History of Protestantism", in *Minjung and Korean Theology*, ed. Committee of Theological Study of KNCC (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 1982), pp. 223ff.

the Korean people. This was the greatest mass movement of the Korean people in all their history in which more than three million Koreans directly participated. There has been an agreement that Tonghak religion and Protestantism took a leading role in this movement. Choo argues that; "Of the people who constituted the movement, farmers were 59 percent, Christians 22 percent, and men in their twenties 40 percent. The farmers were representatives of the suffering people in that time. With 22 percent Christians, we may say that the Christian minjung provided much of the leadership of this movement".<sup>53</sup>

Korea was liberated from Japanese occupation in 1945. With the liberation, however, Korea was divided into north and south, and the armies of USSR and USA stationed in north and south. The Korean War broke out as a result of ideological conflict that was, of course, backed by the two super powers (1950-1953). Churches in the north were persecuted and almost exterminated by the communist party. Churches in the south were split again and again due to denominationalism and conflict between fundamental and progressive faith. We would say that in this period the Church had no active role in society and kept largely silent.

Many theologians take the Student Revolution of April 19, 1960, as the beginning of the period of awakening,

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<sup>53</sup>. Choo Chai-Yong, "A Brief Sketch of Korean Christian History", p. 77.



because they believe that this revolutionary movement was an heir to the spirit of the March First Independence Movement 1919 and to the historical traditions of the movements for freedom and human rights. With the emergence of the students' revolutionary movement, the Korean Church once again began to see its mission in its social milieu. On 16 May 1961, there was a military coup d'etat. The Korean National Council of Churches (KNCC) issued a statement in 1962 urging the military government to hand over its political power to civilians. In 1965 the KNCC also objected to the restoration of relationships between Korea and Japan. In the same year, 240 Christian leaders had a meeting and made a statement opposing the ratification of the agreement between Korea and Japan. The mass media noted that this statement was the first political resolution of the whole Korean Church since the March First Independence movement of 1919. In 1973, the Korean Christian Declaration was made by leading clergymen of the Korean Church.<sup>54</sup> In its conclusion the 1973 Korean Christian Declaration states:

Jesus the Messiah, our lord, lived and dwelt among the oppressed, poverty-stricken, and sick in Judea. He boldly confronted Pontius Pilate, a representative of the Roman Empire, and he was crucified while witnessing to the truth. He has risen from the Dead, releasing the power to transform and set the people free.

We resolve that we will follow the footsteps of our Lord, living among our oppressed and poor people,

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<sup>54</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 77ff.

standing against political oppression, and participating in the transformation of history, for this is the only way to the Messianic Kingdom.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>. Requoted from *Ibid.*, p. 78.

### 1.3. Amitabha Worship and Mayitreya Worship

It is important to have a basic knowledge of Buddhism to understand the spirituality of Asians generally and the image of Jesus and the 'Kingdom of God' particularly. The story of Buddhism in Asia is very difficult to compress into a few paragraphs. Only its two important traditions will be touched on here; Amitabha and Mayitreya Buddhism.

At a very early period China and India were in contact, perhaps from the third century B.C. It is believed that the name of the Buddha and his teachings were known in China before the time of the Emperor Ming Ti (58-75 A.D.). The introduction of Buddhism into Korea followed soon after the fourth-century spread of that religion in China. Korea took up the new religion and its accompanying culture and developed them in a remarkably short time, so that by the middle of the sixth century a king of Korea was sending missionaries, images and books to the King of Japan.<sup>56</sup>

It is not Hinayana Buddhism but Mahayana Buddhism which has been loved and has prospered in Asia. To the

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<sup>56</sup>. John B. Noss, *Op.cit.*, pp. 158ff. Arnold Toynbee, *Mankind and Mother Earth* (New York & London: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 358-359.

common people, the Mahayana offered the good news of the existence of multitudes of saviours, real and potential, whose chief desire was the cure or the amelioration of the sufferings of human beings. Traditionally in the Mahayana the authors of salvation are of three kinds, falling naturally into order; they are the Manushi Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas, and the Dhyani Buddhas. In Asia, however, two unique authors of salvation were formed.<sup>57</sup> One is Amitabha, the other is Mayitreya whose doctrines are in sharp contrast to one another.

The essence of Amitabha worship is that; i) Amitabha assures 'future' bliss. A believer will be born again after his death in the Pure Land. Since the belief in Amita is the promise of paradise after death, "Amita Buddhism was used to placate the minjung by saying that even a slave could enter the Buddhist paradise".<sup>58</sup> ii) A believer need not do meritorious works and deeds to secure his future re-birth in the Pure Land. Faith in Amitabha is both necessary and sufficient for salvation, i.e. human beings can be saved only by faith. Noss says that "in this conception original Buddhism is completely transcended".<sup>59</sup> However, this is one of the typical Buddhist styles of worship in China, Korea, and

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<sup>57</sup>. John B. Noss, *Op. cit.*, pp. 162ff

<sup>58</sup>. Suh Nam-Dong, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung", in *Minjung Theology*, p. 175.

<sup>59</sup>. John B. Noss, *Op. cit.*, p. 165.

particularly in Japan. This point has been further developed in Japan in the name of Jodoism.<sup>60</sup>

On the other hand, Mayitreya was a historical person who was a disciple of Guatama Buddha.<sup>61</sup> According to Mayitreya worship, however, he is the 'next-Buddha' now a Bodhisattva, that is a Buddha-in-the-making. The core of Mayitreya worship can be summed up as follows; i) Mayitreya hears the prayer and suffering of the people and comes actively to men's aid. He has a special interest in the people of the 'current time', i.e. he as the saviour can come at any time. ii) When he comes again, the Yongwha-world would be realized in 'this world'. In other words, it is a self-helping belief which is different from Amitabha Buddhism in that it is concerned with the realization of the new Yongwha world. The content of the Yongwha world is no longer abstract; it is

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<sup>60</sup>. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 165-171. When K.Barth meets the 'doctrine of grace' in Jodoism, he is amazed to see a religion of *gratia sola* in Amitabha worship. He says: "We can regard it as a wholly providential disposition that as far as I can see the most adequate and comprehensive and illuminating heathen parallel to Christianity, a religious development in the Far East, is parallel not to Roman or Greek Catholicism, but to Reformed Christianity, thus confronting Christianity with the question of its truth even as the logical religion of grace". Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I/2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1970), p. 340.

<sup>61</sup>. There has been a quest to the historical Mayitreya among scholars in Korea. The agreed points are as follows; i) Mayitreya was a historical person, ii) He was a disciple of Guatama Buddha, iii) Radical de-mythologizing is necessary to find the real Mayitreya. Cf. Goe Yeun, "Mayitreya and Minjung", in *Essays on Minjung*, pp. 441ff. Suh Nam-Dong, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung", in *Minjung Theology*, pp. 174ff.

the realization of absolute peace and equality. Accordingly belief in Mayitreya and the thirst for his coming ignited many resistance movements.<sup>62</sup> "Mayitreya Buddhism has contributed to the revolutionary practice and belief of the minjung".<sup>63</sup> There have been countless movements against authorities based on Mayitreya Buddhism in China and Korea.<sup>64</sup>

Several minjung theologians think that there is no basic difference between the 'Second Apocalypse' of Tonghak religion, the 'Yongwha World' of Mayitreya Buddhism and the 'Kingdom of God' in the New Testament'.<sup>65</sup> We will not try to compare their superficial similarities. However, we can understand how they are similar when we look at the minjung theologians' view on the 'Kingdom of

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<sup>62</sup>. Goe Yeun, *Op. cit.*, pp. 450ff.

<sup>63</sup>. Suh Nam-Dong, "Historical Reference for a Theology of Minjung", p. 136.

<sup>64</sup>. Most of the leaders of revolutionary movements believed that 'the Yongwha world has been inaugurated', and claimed that 'now is the time of the Mayitreya!' *Ibid.*, pp. 175-176. Goe Yeun, *Op. cit.*, pp. 455-485. It seems that Mayitreya Buddhism was also influential in south east Asia. Pieris says, "But what about Burma's Buddhist resurgence, which was messianically political? Initially aimed at Burmese Kings, it was later directed toward their British successors. There must have been about twenty revolts from 1838 to 1928--all inspired by the Mayitreya cult; the eschatological expectation of a just social order to be ushered in with the appearance of the future Buddha." Aloysius Pieris SJ, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), p. 105.

<sup>65</sup>. Cf. Kim Yong-Bock, *Korean Minjung and Christianity* (Seoul: Hyung Sung Press, 1981), p. 198. Suh Nam-Dong, *A Study of Minjung Theology* (Seoul: Hangil Press, 1983), pp. 125-127.

God'.

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## 2. The Formation of Minjung Theology

### 2.1. Social Biography of the Minjung

In 1970s minjung theology came into existence during the process of the identification of the Christian movement and the minjung movement. Its direct background stemmed from social, political and cultural realities which dictatorship had produced in the 1960s and 1970s. From the minjung movements, Korean theologians, who had sought a new way to establish Korean theology, focused on the 'minjung' as their concern and theme of theology. The title 'minjung theology' was given officially by the Korean theologians in the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) in 1979.

What is noteworthy is that at first minjung movements burst out in widely diverse fields, i.e. the minjung's struggle against dictatorship, minjung art, minjung literature, and minjung historiography, etc. Then later theologians tried to theologize the minjung movements. Besides, as we have seen, the Korean Church has its unique cultural traditions and spirituality. It may be true that along with European theologies such as 'death of God theology', 'theology of hope', or 'political theology', liberation theology of Latin America might be a



'stimulation' to the formation of minjung theology. However, if we approach minjung theology as an Asian version of liberation theology caused by liberation theology of Latin America, we will not be able to grasp the core of minjung theology. Cardinal Stephen Kim says in his greeting to G.Gutierrez;

I should like to add here a small note about Korea. It has always intrigued me that around the same time liberation theology began to ferment in Latin America, there were similar seminal beginnings in Korea also. Around twenty to twenty-five years ago, lay men and women began living in small groups with farmers, labourers, and the urban poor. Some remarkable things happened. This sharing of lives developed into a real movement for justice. And when small groups (of Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, but mainly persons with no religion) came together and discussed their lives in the light of the word of God, here also, there were startling results: persons with no religious backgrounds made statements and prayers whose content rivals the theology and spirituality of our greatest mystics.

What particularly interests me is the fact that we have, here in Korea, the "makings" of a theology of liberation. But, in fact, liberation theology came from Latin America--it never "happened" here.<sup>66</sup>

This shows a basic difference between Latin American theology and minjung theology; almost all the 'poor' are Christians in Latin America, while, as we have seen in the above quotation, the 'minjung' in Korea are not necessarily Christians. Their religious backgrounds are different among themselves, but they are one race and

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<sup>66</sup>. Cardinal Stephen Kim, "Greetings", in *The Future of Liberation Theology*, p. 20.

share homogeneous cultural traditions and history. It is one of the chief reasons why minjung theologians attempt to theologize the historical minjung movements in which the people participated irrespective of their religions. Therefore the issue of definition of 'minjung' has been the subject of heated discussion from the beginning. There are largely two groups concerned with the definitions of 'minjung'.

The first group argues that the conceptions of 'minjung' should be defined on the social, economic, political and cultural levels. There is no agreement in this group regarding the precise definition of the minjung. However most of theologians in this group do not see 'minjung' by class-conception. The life of the minjung cannot be sharply classified into economic, political or cultural realms. For example, one can be a minjung politically, but at the same time he is not a minjung economically. Nevertheless we could understand roughly the definition of the minjung in this group as being that 'the minjung are those who are oppressed politically, exploited economically, alienated sociologically, and kept uneducated in cultural and intellectual matters'.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>. Cf. Han Wan-Sang, *Minjung Sociology* (Seoul: Jongro Books Press, 1969), pp. 63-77. Kim Sung-Jae, "A Study of Methodology of Minjung Education", in *Minjung and Korean Theology*, pp. 393 ff. Hyun Young-Hak, "Minjung, Servant of Suffering, Hope", in *Developments of Korean Minjung Theology in 1980s* (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 1990), ed. Korea Theological Study Institute,

The second group, to which most theologians belong, asserts that the minjung should not be defined. 'Minjung' is not a conception or object which can be easily explained by definition. They believe that 'minjung' cannot be understood by the terms of social science, but can be grasped as a 'reality' as it is, emerging on the surface of history. In other words, the minjung should not be reduced to fixed conceptions, because they are a living, changing and dynamic reality. The minjung have existed not in special societies, but in history from the beginning.<sup>68</sup> Kim Yong-Bock says;

The minjung are the permanent reality of history. Kingdoms, dynasties, and states rise and fall; but the minjung remain as a concrete reality in history, experiencing the comings and goings of political powers. Although the minjung understood themselves in relation to the power which is in command, they are not confined by that power. The minjung transcend the power structures which attempt to confine them through the unfolding of their stories.<sup>69</sup>

On the other hand, they argue that the minjung are the subjects of history. The minjung can be understood

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pp. 11ff.

<sup>68</sup>. Kim Yong-Bock, *Korean Minjung and Christianity*, pp. 89-123. Suh Nam-Dong, *A Study of Minjung Theology*, pp. 161ff. Ahn Byung-Mu, "Minjung movement and Minjung Theology", in *Developments of Korean Minjung Theology in 1980s*, pp. 24ff.

<sup>69</sup>. Kim Yong-Bock, "Messiah and Minjung: Discerning Messianic Politics over Against Political Messianism", in *Minjung Theology*, p. 183.

through their own stories in history. It is Kim who introduces a new term into minjung-debates, i.e. social biography of the minjung:

The identity and reality of the minjung is known not by a philosophical or scientific definition of their essence or nature, but rather through their own stories--their social biographies which the minjung themselves create and therefore can tell best. This story of the minjung of their social biography is told vis-à-vis the power structure that rules the people; and therefore power is the antagonist in the story, while the people are the subjects. The minjung themselves are the protagonists. Thus the story of the minjung entails a historical understanding, which regards them as subjects--not as objects--of their own story and destiny.<sup>70</sup>

Minjung's social biography means, concretely speaking, those stories which contain and reveal the minjung's despair, desire, joy and hope, etc. There are largely two ways to get the stories. Firstly, they are hidden in historical documents; there have not been many stories available directly, since until recently historical writings have usually centred on the ruling power. Therefore it is necessary to read history from below, from the point of view of the minjung, rather than from the point of view of the ruling power. Secondly, the social biography of the minjung directly exists where the language of the minjung exists, since one cannot separate the message from the medium--language. There is the

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<sup>70</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

language of the minjung, for instance, in the mask-dance (in Korea), folk poems and stories, and particularly in the minjung movements, etc.<sup>71</sup>

In this context, Hyun raises a radical question, 'Was God a cripple who was carried piggy-back to Korea by the first missionary?'<sup>72</sup> It is a serious question to Korean Christians. Since on the one hand they know that the Christianity was introduced only about one or two hundred years ago; while before Christianity was introduced, their ancestors had their own salvation-system in other religions. Traditionally, ancestor worship has formed a very important part of religious spirituality not only in Korea but also in China and Japan. As we have seen, *Rite Controversy* in 1801 (ancestor worship versus Christian rite) entailed one of the worst persecution for Christians. On the other hand Christianity is still not a majority in the religions of Asia.<sup>73</sup> Therefore not many

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<sup>71</sup>. Kim Yong-Bock, *Korean Minjung and Christianity*, pp. 109-123. Suh Nam-Dong, *A Study of Minjung Theology*, pp. 50-82. In a slightly different manner, C. S. Song collects peoples' stories and poems from many countries, and he tries to give them biblical meanings. Cf. *Tell us Our Names* (New York: Orbis, 1984). *Theology from the Womb of Asia* (New York: Orbis, 1986).

<sup>72</sup>. Hyun Young-Hak, *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>73</sup>. In Korea out of total population over fifteen years old, 54 percent have religion. For the religious 51.3 percent are Buddhists, 34.4 percent are protestants, and 10.6 percent are Catholics. "Social Statistics in 91", *Dong-A Daily Newspaper* (Seoul), 22 November 1991, p. 22. In China and Japan the ratio of Christians is less than 3 percent. Cf. David B. Barrett. (ed). *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Study of Churches and Religions in the Modern World AD 1900-2000*. (Nairobi:

Christians dare to say that one can be saved only by the name of Jesus Christ, which gives the impression that their ancestors could not be saved. If the answer to the above question is 'no', this means that God was with Korean people even before Christianity was introduced into Korea. Then the next question would be like this; 'When and in what way was God with them in Korean history?' In other words, some events or movements in Korean history must reveal more clearly the presence of God or the will of God. And if an event reveals the will of God it can be a messianic event, and the participants of the event can come to carry out a messianic role through the event. Minjung theologians suggest many traditions and movements in Korea as *messianic movements*, which are the best social biographies of the minjung as well. Their suggestions are various, but the followings are generally agreed ones which we have already surveyed briefly; the Mayitreya Buddhism, *Hong Kiltong Cheon*, Tonghak movement and the March First Independence movement of 1919.<sup>74</sup> Suh argues that the minjung movements of Korea and messianic movements such as the Exodus, the activities of prophets and the Jesus-event in the Bible are going in the same direction and ultimately join together. He calls this

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Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 231, 419.

<sup>74</sup>. Kim Yong-Bock, "Messiah and Minjung", pp. 187ff. Suh Nam-Dong, *A Study of Minjung Theology*, pp. 63ff. Ahn Byung-Mu, *The Story of Minjung Theology* (Seoul: Korea Theological Institute, 1988), p. 223.

idea the 'merging of two stories'; one set of stories concerns the minjung in Korean history, the other stories concern the minjung in Scripture.<sup>75</sup>

Minjung theologians approach the Bible from the perspective of the minjung. They believe that there are stories of the minjung in the Bible.

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<sup>75</sup>. Suh Nam-Dong, *A Study of Minjung Theology*, pp. 78ff.



## 2.2. The Minjung in the Bible

Minjung theologians attempt to establish the biblical basis for a theology of minjung. The fundamental question is, 'Do we find the minjung in the Bible?' They believe that in the Old Testament, from the beginning, the minjung are partners of the covenant with God and the true subjects of human history. There is a tendency that theologians try to identify the minjung and 'apiru or 'amha'aretz in the Old Testament.<sup>76</sup> But we will not look at this matter in detail. Instead we will focus on 'minjung' of the New Testament, who can be identified with Jesus.

According to Ahn, form critics view the editorial sections about the people surrounding Jesus as only the framework for the words of Jesus or for the kerygma that Jesus is the Christ. Therefore the people have been excluded and as a result, a very important aspect has been lost. Though redaction critics consider the redactional framework important both for understanding the viewpoint of the author and the import of Jesus' sayings in context, they too have paid little attention to the audience of

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<sup>76</sup>. Cf. C.H.S.Moon, *A Korean Minjung Theology: An Old Testament Perspective* (New York: Orbis, 1985). Kim Jeong-Jun, "Old Testament Foundation for Minjung Theology", in *Minjung and Korean Theology*, pp. 29-57.



Jesus. Redaction critics prefer to concentrate on the 'theology' of the author as found in his redactional statements and redactional arrangements.<sup>77</sup>

Ahn and Suh attempt to identify the audience of Jesus in the Gospel according to Mark: As early as Mark 1:22 the crowd is mentioned, and it continually appears on the scene. At the beginning, 'the people', or the third person plural, 'all' is used to refer to them. In this way attention is drawn to the people (1:22,30,32,33,37,44,45; 2:2). Eventually the concept which represents the many people (*polloi*) appears on the stage--this is *ochlos* (2:4). In the Gospel of Mark, there are thirty-six occurrences of the word *ochlos* without counting the indicative pronouns. On the other hand, there is one more word to indicate the people--*laos*. It may be normally expected that the term *laos* rather than *ochlos* would be used for the people, since the term *laos* occurs far more frequently in the language of the biblical writers. The term *laos* is used around two thousand times in the Septuagint. However, in the Gospel of Mark there is no use of the word *laos* except in a quotation from the Old Testament in 7:6 and in the words of the chief priests and lawyers (14:2). Besides, Mark is the first writer to introduce the term *ochlos* in the New Testament, because it does not appear in any other New Testament

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<sup>77</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark, in *Minjung Theology*, pp. 138ff.

writing before Mark. But the documents written after Mark, such as the other Gospels and Acts, contain this word many times, proving the influence of Mark. Ahn and Suh argue that Mark has a definite intention in the use of *ochlos*.<sup>78</sup>

Ahn and Suh try to determine the character of the *ochlos* and the relationship between Jesus and the *ochlos*. Let us look at important points from their arguments; i) They were the so-called sinners and the outcasts, who stood condemned in their society. It is true that they had neither an established position in their society nor were they members of an identifiable economic class. However when we consider the fact that they were contrasted with the ruling class of that time and that Jesus was criticized for associating with them, it becomes possible to classify the *ochlos* as the condemned and alienated class. ii) The *ochlos* were contrasted with the ruling class from Jerusalem who attacked and criticized Jesus as their enemy. The *ochlos* took an anti-Jerusalem position and were clearly on the side of Jesus (Mark 2:4-6; 3:2-21; 4:1; 11:18, 27, 32). Because they were against the rulers, the rulers were afraid of them and tried not to arouse their anger (Mark 11:18, 32; 12:12; 15:8, 15). iii) Wherever Jesus went, the *ochlos* always gathered around him. This means that 'as was his custom', Jesus

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<sup>78</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 139. Suh Nam-Dong, *A Study of Minjung Theology*, pp. 51ff.

taught the *ochlos* (Mark 10:1; 2:13; 4:11-12; 7:4; 11:18), and the *ochlos* were fascinated with Jesus' teachings (Mark 13:18b). iv) Jesus' attitude towards the *ochlos* was consistent. He accepted and supported them without making any conditions. He received them as they were.<sup>79</sup>

From these analyses of the *ochlos*, minjung theologians set several premises. Firstly, the *ochlos* are the 'minjung' in the times of Jesus. Secondly, Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God to them. Thirdly, Jesus identified himself with them. Out of these premises, the second and the third items will be examined fully in our discussion.

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<sup>79</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Op. cit.*, pp. 140ff. Suh Nam-Dong, *Op. cit.*, pp. 52ff, 141ff.

### 3. Jesus in Minjung Theology

#### 3.1. The Kingdom of God

Minjung theologians believe that the life of Jesus should be understood against his proclamation of the Kingdom of God. The whole life of Jesus is involved in proclaiming the Kingdom of God and in working for it. When Jesus proclaims the Kingdom of God Jesus assumes that his audience knows about it and is waiting for its coming. For Minjung theologians, in principle, the Kingdom of God does not mean a territory but a certain reality in which the sovereignty of God is established. We can call this reality the Reign of God.<sup>80</sup>

The teachings and activities of Jesus concerning the Reign of God can be summarised by two particular aspects: i) Challenging and rejecting the existing social order based on Judaism, i.e. struggling against any human dominating power opposing the sovereignty of God. ii) The other side of struggling against human power; namely, creating a new movement of 'sharing', which can be symbolized by the 'meal sharing' movement.<sup>81</sup> These two

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<sup>80</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Jesus of Galilee* (Seoul: Korea Theological Institute, 1990), pp. 104ff. Kim Yong-Bock, *Korean Minjung and Christianity*, pp. 150ff.

<sup>81</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Jesus of Galilee*, pp. 101ff.

points are closely related to each other, and one can experience the Reign of God, when he follows these two aspects of Jesus.

The Struggle of Jesus : Ahn introduces the term 'public' into 'the Reign of God' discussion. According to him, human beings are 'public' beings. Each person belongs only to God. God is also a 'public' being, which cannot be idealized or privately owned by a powerful individual or group. Materials and power are also 'public' things, which should not be monopolized by a certain class. Jesus resolutely objected to any attempt to privatize 'public' matters. This is the exact meaning of the sovereignty of God (the reign of God) in which any kind of human-privatizing is not allowed. Therefore, the focus of Jesus' criticism was directed to the religious and political leaders of his time, when they privatized God, man, power, material, etc.<sup>82</sup>

Ahn believes that the miracles of Jesus must be dealt with in the light of the Reign of God. For Ahn there is no Christological purpose in the miracle story. Because i) the emphasis is not placed on the greatness of Jesus through miracle story. Most of those who are cured praise not Jesus but God. ii) The miracles do not presuppose faith in Jesus. iii) In many cases, attention is not drawn

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<sup>82</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 206ff. *The Story of Minjung Theology*, pp. 202ff.

to the miracles themselves, but to those who are cured. For instance, Jesus sent them to their homes after curing them, i.e. restorations of the lost rights. iv) Jesus does not have initiative in the miracle stories. Miracles are one of Jesus' responses to the minjung, who approached Jesus on their own initiative. Ahn argues that miracle story is the minjung's language. The miracle story contains the experience and life of the minjung such as their despair, joy, sadness and hope, etc.<sup>83</sup>

Ahn argues that the understanding of the socio-religious background of Jesus' time is necessary to understand the meaning of the miracles correctly. He focused on the 'sinners' and the 'sick' in relation to the socio-religious structures: A sinner in the Judaic tradition primarily signified one who was a criminal before God. Concretely, it was an overall designation for people who could not accomplish the duty of the law. The sinner in Jewish society was defined in two ways. One was a publicly recognized criminal, offender against the law, and the other was a person in a lowly, i.e. a socially unacceptable occupation as defined in those days. The reason why the occupation made a person a sinner was because the occupation violated the law, either directly or indirectly, and not because of the occupation itself. These were persons who could not rest on the Sabbath day

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<sup>83</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Jesus of Galilee*, pp. 153ff.

because of the character of their occupations such as boatmen, shepherds and prostitutes. Or, persons who were unclean or those who had to handle things defined as impure such as leather-makers, coppersmiths and butchers. They were alienated and could not participate in worship. Even persons who could not fulfil the requirement of the law because of sickness or poverty were also designated sinners. In Judaism, sickness like other forms of ill fortune was considered to be punishment for sin. The sick appear many times in the Gospels, and many cases it seems that they have already been deserted by their family and neighbours. The reason why the sick were socially alienated was because they were poor and their condition was contrary to the law of cleanliness. From this standpoint, religious sin and social alienation were two sides of the same coin.<sup>84</sup>

Therefore the advent of the Reign of God in the miracle stories must be regarded as bringing liberation not just from disease and sin but rather from the whole dominating system and from the ideas upon which it was founded. The exorcisms and healing miracles reveal this clearly, that is to say, the satanic rule, the symbol of structural evil, has been broken. Jesus believed that when satanic rule is destroyed, the Reign of God is inaugurated. We see in the miracles that the Reign of God

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<sup>84</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, "Jesus and Minjung in the Gospel of Mark", pp. 142-146.

has dawned out of earthly distress and satanic toils. Therefore Ahn argues that the Reign of God has been realized in the activities of Jesus.<sup>85</sup>

According to Ahn Jesus fundamentally broke away from Judaism.<sup>86</sup> Jesus broke the law of Sabbath and of cleanliness, which were a heavy burden for the minjung. Jesus also destroyed the traditions of elders and irritated all basic laws in Judaism such as murder, adultery, swearing, divorce and retaliation. Jesus magnified the law of murder and adultery by adding a spiritual meaning. It went beyond the compass of the positive law. Therefore no one was able to judge whether a person violated the law of murder or adultery. In the case divorce, swearing and retaliation, Jesus interdicted the law itself. It means that Jesus rejected and

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<sup>85</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Jesus of Galilee*, pp. 111-124. *The Story of Minjung Theology*, p. 238.

<sup>86</sup>. One may argue that Jesus should be understood primarily in the framework of Judaism. Some studies in the early Christianity and Judaism point out that in its first appearance Christianity might not have looked all that different from Judaism. Cf. especially these three volumes, *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*: vol.I, *The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries* (London: SCM, 1980) ed. E.P.Sanders. vol.II, *Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period* (London: SCM, 1981), eds., E.P.Sanders, A.I.Baumgarten & A.Mendelson. vol.III, *Self-Definition in the Graeco-Roman World* (London: SCM, 1982), eds. B.M.Meyer & E.P.Sanders. However the point of minjung theology must be understood that, though there was a continuity between Jesus, the early Christianity and Judaism, the distinctiveness of Jesus can be seen from Jesus' criticism and struggle against Judaism when it becomes an ideology for the existing social order.



nullified the law of Judaism rather than deepened it.<sup>87</sup>

**The Sharing Movement:** Ahn emphasizes that the most consistent thing in the whole life of Jesus was sharing meals. It is impossible to perceive the Reign of God without understanding the table fellowship of Jesus. The life of Jesus appears as an "eating together" movement. There are many meal scenes in the four Gospels. Wherever Jesus went, he usually ate and drank together with his followers. Jesus often explained the Reign of God with the parables of feast. Jesus spent his last night at the table with his followers. Jesus took eating and drinking as a matter of course in the Reign of God. Ahn asserts that "if there is no sharing meal it is not the Reign of God".<sup>88</sup> To be sure, the point in Jesus' table-fellowship is not food itself but the attitude of 'sharing'. In other words, on the one hand Jesus struggled against satanic rule. On the other hand Jesus created a new community by sharing meals together. Several minjung theologians and lay Christians put stress on the attitude of 'sharing', and we can sum up their emphases as saying:

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<sup>87</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *The Story of Minjung Theology*, pp. 199ff.

<sup>88</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 239.

When we share rice, we become the new family (community) i.e. the realization of the Reign of God.<sup>89</sup>

Though they place stress on the table-fellowship, there have been few full discussions about it. However, if we understand Asian 'rice-culture' and the semantic meanings of 'we' and 'family', we will realize that for minjung theologians full explanations about table-fellowship of Jesus may not be necessary.

It is very natural for Asians that the table-fellowship of Jesus appears as the most important element for understanding the Reign of God, since they have preserved their own particular table-community for a long time. Many religions in Korea adopt the principle of sharing rice as the main subject of social ethics. For instance, 'um-bok' (partaking of sacrificial food and drinks) in Confucianism and 'gong-yang' (providing others with food) in Buddhism are strongly required in the daily lives of their believers. Accordingly eating together becomes the centre of the religious ceremonies. The common table of Buddhism may be a good example to show how much eating together is emphasized among other sacrificial events. In a Buddhist temple, as the climax of the sacrifice, monks, nuns with unshaved head and other ordinary believers share rice together sitting in a

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<sup>89</sup>. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 232-239. Kim Chi-Ha, "Minjung as the Bearer of Life", in *Essays on Minjung*, pp. 529ff.

circle, eating every grain of the rice, and drinking water which cleaned the rice bowls. At the table, each participant cannot remain as an individual as 'I', but becomes one member of the organic community. Besides traditionally 'rice' has particular connotations in Asia. Rice contains divine character. They believe that in rice, which has been produced in cooperation with God, nature and human beings, heaven and earth become one. Therefore, rice has been understood as something to be shared with others in thanks.<sup>90</sup> A minjung poet Kim recites;

Rice is heaven  
As we can't go to heaven alone  
We should share rice with one another  
As all share the light of the heavenly stars  
We should share and eat rice together  
Rice is Heaven  
When we eat and swallow rice  
Heaven dwells in our body  
Rice is Heaven  
Ah, ah, rice is the matter  
We should eat together<sup>91</sup>

Next, we have to look at the semantic matters concerning 'we' and 'family'. Asian people who understand

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<sup>90</sup>. In Asia, rice is closely related to the lives of people in many aspects. Accordingly, it comes to contain many connotations. For instance, in Japan many family names are related to 'rice' or 'rice field'; Toyota--rich rice field, Tanaka--the centre of the rice field, Honda--original rice field, etc. Cf. M.Takenaka, *God is Rice* (Geneva: WCC, 1986), pp. 21-22.

<sup>91</sup>. In 1975 Kim Chi-Ha was nominated for the Nobel prize in both peace and literature.

Chinese characters express one human being (ihn-kan, 人間) in a plural form; they do not have a character indicating one human being. Ihn(人) is a letter expressing two persons helping each other, and kan (betweeness, 間) indicates the basic ethical attitude of human life. Influenced by this tradition, Koreans hardly use the first person singular, especially in the genitive case; they usually say 'our son' or 'our home' instead of 'my son' or 'my home', etc. The word 'we' of 'our' (u-ri) has two meanings; the plural of 'I' and a 'pen' for the domestic animals. Therefore, the word 'we' can connote those who have same purpose and destiny. On the other hand, sig-gu (family, 食口) means generally those who share rice together from the same kettle. Sig-gu is a compound word of sig (eating, 食) and gu (mouth, 口).<sup>92</sup> In community feast, a cauldron, a big iron pot for cooking rice, is used instead of a house kettle. Traditionally, sharing rice from the cauldron, singing and dancing joyfully, all participants used to say that they become one sig-gu. Therefore, the Reign of God is understood as the new family in which all members share their lives and have the same destiny.

Minjung theologians believe that the Reign of God cannot be an abstract conception, but is a new reality which should be concretized among human beings. From the

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<sup>92</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *The Story of Minjung Theology*, pp. 323ff.

parables and deeds of Jesus, they suggest that the 'joy of sharing', 'peace', 'equality', 'justice' can be the concretization of the Reign of God.<sup>93</sup> Out of these four items let us see the precise meaning of 'peace' in Asia. The word pyung-wha (peace, 平和) is never an abstract concept. Pyung-wha is a compound word combined by two letters, 平 and 和. Both of them mean peace; strictly speaking, 平, equality and big peace, implies a peaceful state without war, or a state of political stability; 和, small peace, connotes the harmony of a peaceful state among people, without even minor quarrels, or a state where all causes of conflict are removed. The letter 和, by the way, consists of 禾 which pertains to rice and 口 which means mouths. Therefore, the literal meaning of 'peace' can be a reality which is achieved by 'eating rice equally'. For the minjung, therefore, the distribution of rice is the starting point to achieve peace; eating together in the communal banquet is the actual place where peace is being realized through distributive justice.

As we have seen, minjung theologians believe that there is no basic difference between the Reign of God in

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<sup>93</sup>. They have slightly different emphases on the concretization of the Reign of God. However, it seems that they would agree to above four items. Cf. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Jesus of Galilee*, pp. 117ff. *Christ in Minjung Event* (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 1989), pp. 11-21. Kim Yong-Bock, *Korean Minjung and Christianity*, pp. 150ff, 160ff. Suh Nam-Dong, *A Study of Minjung Theology*, pp. 130ff.

the New Testament, the Second Apocalypse in Tonghak religion, and the Yongwha world in Mayitreya Buddhism.<sup>94</sup> It is true that there are many similarities; both the Second Apocalypse and the Yongwha world are something to be realized in this world. They can be experienced when we are struggling against satanic rule. They also can be concretized in such terms as sharing, peace, equality and justice etc. However it would be difficult to conclude here whether the Reign of God of the New Testament has been understood by the background of the Second Apocalypse and the Yongwha world. If there is no basic difference between the Reign of God, which is the key activity and teaching of Jesus, and the Second Apocalypse and the Yongwha world, then it will be necessary to look at minjung theologians' understanding of 'Jesus', the founder of Christianity.

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<sup>94</sup>. Cf. Kim Yong-Bock, *Korean Minjung and Christianity*, p. 198. Suh Nam-Dong, *A Study of Minjung Theology*, pp. 125-127.

### 3.2. Jesus and Minjung

Almost all minjung theologians assert that Jesus did not live 'for' minjung. Rather he lived as a minjung. They believe that Jesus, as one of the minjung, proclaimed the Reign of God to the minjung of his time. When minjung theologians assert that Jesus is minjung and *vice versa*, it is not easy to grasp the exact meaning of this identification of Jesus with the minjung. Of course, there are several biblical references that can be used to prove this. According to Ahn, after the brief narration in Mark 3:34 ('and looking around on those who sat about him...') Jesus announces that they are his mother and his brothers. Previously in verse 32, it is written, "A crowd was sitting about him...." This editorial phase specifically refers to the *ochlos*. The announcement indicates, on the one hand, a deliberate extrication of Jesus from the tie and demands of kinship and, on the other, it announces that the *ochlos* are the members of a new 'family'.<sup>95</sup> In a similar manner, Suh suggests Matthew 25:34-45 as a biblical reference identifying Jesus and the minjung. Namely, 'whatever we do for one of the least of these

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<sup>95</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu. "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark", p. 141.

brothers we do for Jesus' (Matthew 25:40).<sup>96</sup> However it seems that the biblical evidences suggested by Ahn and Suh are neither sufficiently satisfactory nor the key point of their argument. It is difficult to get a direct answer from them as to how they identify Jesus with the minjung. So let us try to understand how Jesus can be "minjung" from perceiving several aspects of 'Jesus' and 'minjung'.

1) Though Ahn argues that he is interested in the historical Jesus rather than the Christ of the kerygma, this often does not mean that he is interested in the historical Jesus who can be constructed by historical-critical research of the New Testament. Therefore he accepts the results of form and redaction critics very selectively. His concern is fixed on finding the Jesus who created the minjung movement. In other words, most of the minjung theologians are interested in Jesus as far as he is connected to minjung movement;

We cannot think of Jesus of Galilee without the minjung, and we cannot think of the minjung in the Gospels without Jesus. ...There is no separate story of Jesus nor a separate story of the minjung, but there is only 'our' story. This story tells us the stages in which Jesus and the minjung live together. Therefore we should admit not only that the Gospels are not a biography of Jesus, but also that they are the history which tells of the Jesus movement.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>. Suh Nam-Dong, "Who are the Minjung" in *Essays on Minjung*, p. 552.

<sup>97</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 138.



Suh makes this point clear: "the subject matter of minjung theology is not Jesus, but the minjung. In the case of minjung theology, Jesus is the means for understanding the minjung correctly, rather than the concept of 'minjung' being the instrument for understanding Jesus".<sup>98</sup> Accordingly, the investigations of minjung theologians are seldom focused on the person or individual life of Jesus. Ahn points out Luke 7:22; When John the Baptist sent his disciples to Jesus to ask 'Are you the one who was to come', Jesus did not answer who he was. Instead Jesus answered the question by the 'events' which were happening. 'The blind receive sight, the lame walk...'. Ahn argues;

The important thing is the event brought into being by him. It is not important nor realistic to identify Jesus with pre-existing conceptions whether they are of the Messiah or the Son of God.<sup>99</sup>

Therefore Ahn does not approach Jesus as an individual person, but regards him as a 'messianic event' or 'messianic movement'. What is noteworthy is that 'messianic' is not a unique title for the Jesus-event. There is a criterion for an event to deserve the title

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<sup>98</sup>. Suh Nam-Dong, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung" in *Minjung Theology*, p. 160.

<sup>99</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 36.

'messianic'. If any event or movement contains 'critical transcendence' of the minjung,<sup>100</sup> this event becomes a messianic event. Accordingly, there have been many messianic events or movements before and after Jesus and the Jesus-event is just one of them. In the Bible the following are regarded as containing messianic events--the Exodus, the tribal lives of ancient Israel, the prophets, and Jesus in Palestine, etc.<sup>101</sup> As we have seen in Korean history the following are regarded as messianic movements--the Mayitreya messianic Buddhism, *Hong Kiltong Cheon*, the Tonghak messianic movement, the March First Independence movement of 1919, etc. Here we assume the points of minjung theologians arguments: i) Jesus is primarily understood as a messianic event or as having a messianic role. ii) This messianic role is not applied only to Jesus. Accordingly, the role of Jesus in the Jesus-event was not unique, and the Jesus-event was not a once-and-for-all eschatological event.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>. 'Critical transcendence' of the minjung does not mean individual self-transcendence but collective transcendence beyond dominant power of the world; the individual transcendence is for escaping from history, while the critical transcendence is for throwing oneself into the tangled history to transform it. The minjung experience this transcendence through their suffering in this present time. Because this is very important term in minjung theology, we will deal with it later in detail.

<sup>101</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *The Story of Minjung Theology*, p. 59.

<sup>102</sup>. *Ibid.*

2) Minjung theologians believe that messiahs can emerge only from the minjung. 'Messiah' means those who can perform messianic roles to realize a 'messianic movement'. Kim argues that there are two kinds of messianism--power messianism and the messianic politics of Jesus. For Kim messianism is the political process of a history in which the minjung join with the messiah in realizing his messianic role. In *power messianism* a messiah comes in the figure of heroic leader who has charismatic power. But it cannot be a true messiah for the minjung, because power messianism attempts to make the minjung a historical nothing or an object of its messianic claims. The *messianic politics* of Jesus are the politics that will realize for the minjung their historical subjectivity, thus making them masters of their own historical destiny. Therefore, messianic politics must be understood as those of the minjung, not that of the leader, especially not that of the ruling power.<sup>103</sup> In other words, even though a powerful leader appears and attempts to liberate the minjung from their sufferings, this is merely power messianism in which the minjung are treated as the object of liberation; this is not a true messianic event nor has the 'leader' of this event a truly messianic role. Therefore, a true messiah must identify

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<sup>103</sup>. Kim Yong-Bock, "Messiah and Minjung", pp. 186, 190.

with the minjung and they as co-subjects participate in movement together. In this sense, Kim argues that "the Messiah emerges from the suffering people and identifies with the suffering people".<sup>104</sup> Suh makes this point clear in comparing Moses and Jesus;

In terms of the minjung, Moses was a heroic leader. But Jesus was a resister who kept company with the minjung. In the case of Moses, the revolution was a success. But in the case of Jesus it seems to have failed, if we evaluate it in the same terms as that of Moses. Actually, if we use the term "revolution" for Jesus, we must recognize the fact that the style of his revolution is different from that of Moses. In the case of Exodus, the revolution occurred only once at a historical point, while the event of Crucifixion-Resurrection was aimed at permanent revolution. In the case of a one-time revolution, the minjung are the objects of salvation (salvation from outside). In the case of permanent revolution, the minjung become the subjects of salvation (self-reliant salvation). Moses answered the cry (aspiration) of the people; but Jesus was the very cry (aspiration) of the people themselves. In this sense, Jesus was truly *a part of* the minjung, not just *for* the minjung.<sup>105</sup>

Now we could conclude the arguments of Minjung theologians; i) Jesus is understood as having a messianic role in the Jesus-event. ii) This messianic role is not historically unique to Jesus. There have been many messianic events before and after Jesus. Those who can

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<sup>104</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>105</sup>. Suh Nam-Dong, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung", p. 159.

perform messianic role can be messiahs.<sup>106</sup> iii) The messiah should identify with the minjung.<sup>107</sup> If he does not identify with the minjung, he is not a true messiah nor is the 'event' a truly messianic event.

In this context, we can deal with the question of a Western theologian. Jürgen Moltmann raised a question in his discussion with Ahn. The point of his question is this; he agrees that Jesus may be minjung, i.e. Jesus may identify with suffering people. But he cannot agree to the other conclusion, namely, that 'minjung' is 'Jesus'. Since the minjung are sinners, they are also the objects of salvation. If 'minjung' can be 'Jesus', who shall bring salvation to the minjung? Ahn's answer was very short; "the minjung bring salvation to themselves in the minjung movement".<sup>108</sup>

Moltmann seems to think that salvation is the unique work of Jesus, and that this unique work cannot be separable from the person of Jesus. While, as we have seen in the above quotation, minjung theologians believe that the minjung are the subjects of salvation--not

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<sup>106</sup>. In this sense, Kim calls Choe Jae-U (the founder of the Tonghak religion) 'Choe Jesus' or 'Choe Messiah.' Cf. Kim Yong-Bock, "Messiah and Minjung", p. 188.

<sup>107</sup>. In this sense, Suh says that "the minjung can come to take the name of Jesus when they appear as a self-aware existence." Cf. Suh Nam-Dong, "Historical References for a Theology of Minjung", p. 160.

<sup>108</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *The Story of Minjung Theology*, p. 125.

salvation from outside, but self-reliant salvation. It seems that for minjung theologians the minjung can be saved apart from 'Jesus'. Because this point is crucial in Christology, we will deal with this matter fully in next section.

### 3.3. Minjung and Salvation

Because sin is often an opposing conception to salvation, let us approach 'salvation' in connection with 'sin'. Minjung theologians do not sharply distinguish the personal character and social character of sin. Ahn and Suh believe that the origin of sin is a certain power which makes humans unwilling to share with others.<sup>109</sup> On the other hand there can be two levels of salvation. One is personal and the other is social or collective conceptions. The first dimension of salvation is self-denial giving up worldly things which were regarded as securing one's future. The second dimension, which is more important for minjung theologians, is to participate in the minjung movement, i.e. the sharing movement.<sup>110</sup> To be sure, roughly, the minjung are those who are exploited, oppressed and alienated. Sociologically speaking, therefore, they cannot be so-called sinners. Rather they are *those who are sinned against*.<sup>111</sup> Thus, the minjung can be seen as wanting revenge upon their oppressors, as if

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<sup>109</sup>. Cf. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Jesus of Galilee*, pp. 204ff.

<sup>110</sup>. Cf. Ahn byung-Mu, *The Story of Minjung Theology*, pp. 125ff, 239.

<sup>111</sup>. Suh Nam-Dong, *A Study of Minjung Theology*, p. 107.

they depended on worldly affairs more than the rich because they were in need. According to minjung theologians, the opposite is the case. They argue from their experiences that only the minjung can empty themselves and participate in the sharing movement, though their socio-economic situations are worse than the anti-minjung. In other words, only the minjung can 'transcend' their situations personally and socially, and join the messianic movement. Minjung theologians call this 'critical transcendence' of the minjung.<sup>112</sup> Moreover 'critical transcendence' of the minjung does not lead them to take revenge on the anti-minjung, though the minjung are those beings sinned against. If they attempt to take revenge on the anti-minjung, they would not succeed in breaking out of the vicious circle. At most, the positions of the minjung and the anti-minjung would be exchanged. Instead, after experiencing critical transcendence, the minjung *forgive* first the sins of the anti-minjung, and through this, salvation and reconciliation are achieved.<sup>113</sup> This must be a point of Lord's prayer, 'forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us'.(Matt.6:12)

To sum up; i) The minjung are in the best position to

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<sup>112</sup>. Hyun Young-Hak, "A Theological Look at the Mask Dance in Korea", in *Minjung Theology*, pp. 50-52. Ahn Byung-Mu, *The Story of Minjung Theology*, pp. 103, 154-155.

<sup>113</sup>. Cf. Ahn Byung-Mu, *The Story of Minjung Theology*, p. 96. Hyun Young-Hack, *Op.cit.*, pp. 50-52.



transcend their situations. ii) Only the minjung are in the position to forgive sins, because they are beings sinned against. In these two aspects minjung theologians argue that the minjung are the subjects of salvation. iii) Therefore, the critical transcendence of minjung is a criterion of a messianic event.

In fact the idea of 'critical transcendence' has been developed by a theological understanding of the traditional mask dance. When this idea is connected to a philosophy of *han* and *dan*, it forms a unique part of Korean theology; but "it is even harder to explain the term [*han*] than the term minjung".<sup>114</sup> Therefore we will look at briefly a philosophy of *han* and *dan* in relation to 'salvation' of minjung.

The mask dance has its roots in the old village festival. With the support of the rising commercial class the mask dance came into its own. It was later performed on festival days in April or May instead of January. The satirical content of the mask dance became more audacious. The village ceremonies which were performed in order to pacify the gods became instead plays for oppressed ordinary people, i.e. the minjung's play ridiculing and criticizing their oppressors. The mask dance is composed

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<sup>114</sup>. Theo Witvliet, *A Place in the Sun: An Introduction to Liberation Theology in the Third World* (London: SCM, 1985), p. 164.

not only of dance but also rhythmic instrumental music, songs and dialogue between the performers and the musicians and particularly between the performers and the audience. The dance movements are dynamic and bold compared to those of the aristocratic dances, which are graceful and elegant. The mask dance is full of humour, satire, and vulgar expressions with a great number of rude words.<sup>115</sup>

On the other hand, the literal meaning of *han* is 'closed mind'. It is very popular word in daily life. In terms of its etymology, *han* is a psychological word. It is a term that denotes the feeling of suffering of a person which has been repressed through the oppression of others. We can translate 'han' into the English phrase 'righteous indignation' or 'a feeling of unresolved resentment against unjustifiable suffering'. But it expresses not only hopelessness; at the same time it is the expression of a positive element, holding fast to the life which emerges from the accumulation of the experience of suffering and provides energy for revolution or rebellion.<sup>116</sup> Suh says;

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<sup>115</sup>. Cf. Hyun Young-hak, "A Theological Look at the Mask Dance in Korea", pp. 47-48. E.King, "Reflections on Korean Dance", in *Korean Dance, Theatre and Cinema* (Seoul: The Si-sa-young-o-sa Publishers, 1983), ed. Korean National Commission, pp. 43-45.

<sup>116</sup>. Cf. Suh Kwang-Sun David, "A Biographical Sketch of an Asian Theological Consultation", in *Minjung Theology*, pp. 24-25. Theo Witvliet, *Op. cit.*, p. 164.

Han is an underlying feeling of Korean people. On the one hand, it is a dominant feeling of defeat, resignation, and nothingness. On the other, it is a feeling with a tenacity of will for life which comes to weaker beings. The first aspect can sometimes be sublimated to great artistic expressions and the second aspect could erupt as the energy for a revolution or a rebellion.<sup>117</sup>

It is true that *han* is a deep feeling that rises out of the unjust experience of the people. However the feeling of *han* is not just an individual feeling of repression. It is not just a sickness that can be cured by psychotherapy. It is a collective feeling of the oppressed as well. *Han* is a deep awareness of the contradictions in a situation and of the unjust treatment meted out to the people by the powerful. "This sickness of *han* can be cured only when the total structure of the oppressed society and culture is changed".<sup>118</sup>

In mask dance severe sarcasm is focused on the structural problems of religious leaders and the aristocratic class, and with humour, the performers attempt to reveal the roots of social ills. Therefore, when the mask dance is being performed, the suppressed feeling of *han* explodes into reality and the minjung get conscientized. The feeling of *han*, however, also has a

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<sup>117</sup>. Suh Nam-Dong, "Towards a Theology of Han", in *Minjung Theology*, p. 58.

<sup>118</sup>. Suh Kwang-Sun David, *Op.cit.*, p. 25.

negative element. It is a repressed murmuring, unexpressed in words or actions. It does not change anything. It might arouse a sense of revenge at most. However, in and through the mask dance, the minjung experience and express a 'critical transcendence' over this world and laugh at its absurdity. Hyun says;

I feel that the most important and significant one is the Miyal-halmi scene. In this scene the minjung lament their lot, but they do it with humour. They laugh at and make fun of their own fate in this world, thereby transcending their own condition. They find themselves standing over and beyond the entire world which include not only the rulers and leaders but also themselves and their own religion. They not only see correctly the reality of the world, which neither the rulers nor leaders can see because of their obsession with or separation from the world, but also envision another reality over against and beyond this one which neither the rulers nor leaders can see either.<sup>119</sup>

Hyun argues that because of this stance of critical transcendence, Korean history bears witness to the fact that the minjung would not become cynical as did some of the learned, and they would not despair as some of the religious leaders did. Instead, they could laugh at themselves, while retaining a sharp and critical awareness of their reality and their world. Because they saw the world and history from another dimension, i.e. the dimension of worldly transcendence, they could continue fighting for a better world. There is this element of

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<sup>119</sup>. Hyun Young-Hak, *Op.cit.*, p. 50.

faith and trust in the human spirit that people can transcend the present history.<sup>120</sup> In other words, the ruling class, the well-to-do people, are the privileged class. They get most of the benefits out of the existing system and consider this the best world. They have vested interests in this world and are anxious to maintain it. On the other hand, the minjung, the ruled ones, get the worst possible deals in this world. Without vested interest in the existing world, they are freer than those who are politically, economically, socially and culturally in the upper echelon of the society. Therefore, the minjung are in the better position to achieve critical transcendence. In this sense, Hyun argues that the subject of critical transcendence is the minjung.<sup>121</sup> This critical-transcendental-power is designated *dan*. The literal meaning of *dan* is 'cutting'. *Dan* has two aspects; in a personal sense, it connotes self-denial; collectively it connotes cutting the vicious circle of revenge. The poet Kim says in his novel;

I separate my body and mind from every comfort and easy life, circles of petit bourgeois dreams, and secular swamps without depth. This is the total content of my faith--I know that only vigorous self-denial is my way. ...Cutting the chain of the circulation of *han*: *dan* is for the transformation of the secular world and secular attachment. Accumulated *han* being met with continuous *dan*. On the one hand, there is the fearful *han* which can kill, cause

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<sup>120</sup>. Cf. Suh Kwang-Sun, *Op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>121</sup>. Hyun Young-Hak, *Op.cit.*, pp. 50-53.

revenge, destroy, and hate endlessly, and on the other, there is the repetition of *dan* to suppress the explosion which can break out of the vicious circle, so that *han* can be sublimated as higher spiritual power.<sup>122</sup>

The cutting of the cycle of revenge would finally establish harmony in the political and social order. For the oppressors, it means that they should stop being greedy and oppressive. For the oppressed, it means that they should stop wishing to be like their masters and wanting to take revenge. Of course, *dan* is not easy for the oppressed either, because once liberation is achieved, it is difficult to resist the temptation to be like their master.<sup>123</sup> Nevertheless minjung theologians argue that 'critical transcendence', the realization of *dan*, can be achieved from the side of the minjung. This is what they call the messianic character of the minjung.<sup>124</sup>

At the end of the mask dance both performance and audience dance together in laughter. The laugh of the minjung means the forgiveness of sin and love after

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<sup>122</sup>. Kim Chi-Ha, *Jang Il Tam*, quoted in Suh Nam-Dong, "Towards a Theology of Han", pp. 64-65.

<sup>123</sup>. Cf. H.S.Moon, *Op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>124</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *The Story of Minjung Theology*, pp. 125-128.  
Suh Nam-Dong, *A Study of Minjung Theology*, p. 180.

cutting the vicious circle of 'revenge' and 'justice'.<sup>125</sup> The performers who played the role of religious and social leaders in the mask dance, join in the dance of the minjung. Anti-minjung and minjung dance together in the loud laughter. Minjung theologians think that this is the meaning of salvation and reconciliation. Because of this, we hardly encounter the name of Jesus in their discussions of salvation.

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<sup>125</sup>. Hyun Young-Hak, "Theological Understanding of Korean Mask Dancing", in *Minjung and Korean Theology*, p. 386.

### 3.4. The Crucifixion and Resurrection

Ahn tries to identify the traditions concerning the resurrection of Jesus; i) There is no purpose in the demonstration of the resurrection by the empty tomb and by the apparition traditions. If the purpose of these traditions is to demonstrate that Jesus has been resurrected, one would assume that they would have included appearances by Jesus to anti-Jesus groups. But these events were conveyed only to the believers. ii) There is no past-oriented element in these traditions. Both the empty tomb and the apparition stories are directed to the future. If the resurrection story contains any past-oriented element, the followers of Jesus must take revenge upon the persecutors of Jesus. But in the resurrection story, the concern of the followers is not directed to the persecutors nor to the risen one, but to the new community (rising of the minjung movement).<sup>126</sup>

Along with this understanding, Ahn and Suh believe that the cross and resurrection of Jesus are not two separate events. Basically i) they deny that the resurrection of Jesus is the revitalization of a cadaver.

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<sup>126</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 35.



ii) They do not think that the resurrection itself is historical fact.<sup>127</sup> iii) Suh does not consider the idea of general resurrection. Suh, based on Asian tradition, argues that it is a blessing to die a natural death. Therefore the meaning of resurrection is related only to those who die a righteous death by unjust power. Accordingly they argue firstly that we have to use the word 'crucifixion' instead of 'death' of Jesus; secondly, that the meaning of the resurrection is not found in the resurrection itself but in his crucifixion.<sup>128</sup>

At first the followers of Jesus could not see the continuity between the life of Jesus and the cross of Jesus. For his followers, the life of Jesus can be summed up as a charismatic struggle against satanic rule. While in his passion and crucifixion the figure of Jesus is full of despair, suffering and hopelessness. However they recognize the meaning of the realization of *dan* in the cross, i.e. cutting the vicious circle by forgiveness and love. For minjung theology this is the meaning of resurrection which gives a radical change to the followers of Jesus. Now they do not see that the cross of Jesus is a miserable defeat. They realise that the reconciliation of the minjung and the anti-minjung has been achieved in

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<sup>127</sup>. Suh Nam-Dong, *A Study of Minjung Theology*, pp. 319-320. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 35.

<sup>128</sup>. Suh Nam-Dong, *Op.cit.*, pp. 317-319. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Op.cit.*, pp. 266ff.

the cross of Jesus, which opens the new eschatological world.<sup>129</sup>

Therefore the 'resurrection' was a kind of powerful expression of the new realization of the followers of Jesus. At first they were frustrated and thought that God had abandoned Jesus on the cross. As soon as they realised the meaning of the cross they understood that the crucifixion was the event of God. Thus, according to Ahn and Suh, the resurrection story of Jesus does not mean the resurrection of Jesus but the 'resurrection' of his followers in which their mode of thinking has been radically changed.<sup>130</sup> In this sense, Ahn says, "The followers themselves were resurrected by witnessing that Jesus was resurrected".<sup>131</sup> They 'rose' again and continued to proclaim the forgiveness and love, which were the meaning of the crucifixion of Jesus.

Ahn believes that there cannot be discontinuity between Jesus and his followers, including Paul. Most of all, the followers of Jesus in Acts and Paul, unlike the Zealots, continued the fundamental attitude of Jesus such as 'suffering' with the minjung, 'sharing' with others,

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<sup>129</sup>. Suh Nam-Dong, *Op. cit.*, pp. 130, 190, 256, 319ff. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Op. cit.*, pp. 279ff.

<sup>130</sup>. Suh Nam-Dong, *Op. cit.*, pp. 130, 319ff. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Op. cit.*, pp. 35, 279ff.

<sup>131</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Op. cit.*, p 275.

'forgiveness' of sin and 'love', etc. In doing this they believed that they were performing the messianic roles initiated by Jesus.<sup>132</sup>

Paul also continued the basic attitudes of Jesus, though he did not simply repeat the teaching of Jesus; i) There was a historical reason why Paul could not mention the historical Jesus concretely in his works, though he was interested in the historical Jesus. For Paul it was not easy to witness to Jesus directly under the reign of the Roman Empire, as Jesus had been persecuted by the Roman authorities. At the same time the primitive church did not want any conflict with the existing Judaism: on the other hand the concern of Paul and the primitive church was mission and maintenance of church order. Therefore the Jesus-event became abstract in the works of Paul. ii) The character of Paul's epistles is close to those of official formulations concerning Jesus. It is never in the form of the narrative of the minjung. Nevertheless Paul deliberately talks about the cross and the one who was crucified instead of merely the death of Jesus. This means that Paul wanted to avoid unnecessary conflict by omitting 'when', 'where', and 'by whom' Jesus was murdered. At the same time it signifies that Paul was interested in the historical Jesus by mentioning 'the

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<sup>132</sup>. Ahn Byung-Mu, *The Story of Minjung Theology*, pp. 95ff.

cross'.<sup>133</sup> iii) The key word 'pistis' in Paul, used in 142 times in his works, does not mean Christological faith, i.e. faith in the person of Jesus. Paul uses this word in more broad sense. It primarily means belief in God and at the same time a mode of existence. So Paul could say, 'You became imitators of us and of the Lord' (I Thessalonians 1:6). This means that there is continuity between the mode of life of Paul or us and of Jesus. Both Jesus and Paul believed that one could not be saved by the law. iv) The core of Pauline theology is 'shalom' (used 43 times), justice of God (used 57 times) and love (used 75 times). These items correspond to peace, justice and sharing respectively in the teaching of Reign of God.<sup>134</sup>

However, for minjung theology the true successors of the Jesus-event were the minjung of Jesus. Today Jesus is in the messianic movement, as he was there. Jesus can be encountered by anyone, whether he knows the name Jesus or not, if he repeats *dan* and sacrifices himself into the minjung movement, as Jesus did.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup>. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 275-280. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Christ in Minjung Event*, pp. 217ff.

<sup>134</sup>. Cf. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Christ in Minjung Event*, pp. 11-21, 261-283.

<sup>135</sup>. Cf. Ahn Byung-Mu, *Jesus of Galilee*, pp. 279ff. Suh Nam-Dong, *Op. cit.*, pp. 323-324.

#### 4. Conclusion

Minjung theology has been formed in its unique historical and cultural life-situation. From their history and culture minjung theologians realise that the minjung are the subjects of history and they are a permanent reality in history. The Scripture and the image of Jesus are radically reinterpreted through an Asian perspective. Therefore, we will not criticize minjung theology from outside. Instead we will point out several Christological problems within minjung theology.

Ahn distinguishes the historical Jesus from the Christ of the Kerygma. He argues that we have to find and follow Jesus of Nazareth. He also argues that he is not interested in the Christ of the Kerygma but in the historical Jesus. In fact, however, his concern does not lie in the historical Jesus nor in the unique person of Jesus. It seems that his intention is to object to a certain way of thinking which depends on a dogmatized Christ. In his enterprise he does not attempt to find the historical Jesus. Rather for Ahn and for most of the minjung theologians, there is a strong tendency to separate the 'work' of Jesus from the 'person' of Jesus. They make their position clear by saying that they are not interested in the individual person and life of Jesus.

Accordingly Jesus is understood primarily as having a messianic role or as a messianic event in minjung movements. They accept only the 'impact' made by Jesus on the messianic movement. According to them, any one can be a 'messianic-event', if he performs a messianic role in minjung movement. Therefore the Jesus-event cannot be a once-and-for-all eschatological event in history. It seems that they do not acknowledge that the work and the person are inseparable. In this manner, though they argue that they are interested in Jesus of Nazareth who really lived in Palestine rather than in the Kerygmatic Christ, the figure of the historical Jesus in minjung theology becomes once again obscure, and only the 'cause', 'role' (e.g. the cause by and for which Jesus lived, and the role of the messianic event) and the 'impact' (e.g. the emergence of the minjung movement) of Jesus remain.

Minjung theologians do not positively connect the role and impact of Jesus to the spirit of Jesus. It is one of the weakest points of minjung theology that it has not developed a proper doctrine of Spirit. Most minjung theologians accept the classical doctrine of Spirit without any re-interpretation in the framework of the traditional doctrine of trinity. Both the causes of Jesus for which he lived, and the impact of Jesus on history reveal the faith and spirit of Jesus. Today we can continue to share and follow the Spirit, which is rooted in the historical Jesus: this can be the meaning of

salvation for us. However, because minjung theologians do not make a connection between the decision of the minjung and the spirit of Jesus, for them salvation means 'self-aware existence' or 'critical transcendence' of the minjung apart from the name of Jesus. The remarkable thing is that because in minjung theology the word 'minjung' is always used collectively, minjung theology overlooks the fact that 'each' person has to make his own decision concerning salvation, i.e. 'the minjung' are not the subjects of salvation, but 'each minjung' is the subject of salvation. Of course minjung theologians argue that critical transcendence has two dimensions, one is personal--self denial and the other is social--joining to minjung movement. But in any case, it is for 'each' minjung to achieve self denial and to decide to join minjung movement. Here we may ask i) what is the common ground which each minjung can achieve his critical transcendence? We are not asking, for a minjung today what can be the *historical references* to achieve critical transcendence (salvation). As minjung theologians argued, the historical references can be many in (Korean) history and in the Bible such as the Tonghak movement, *Hong Kiltong Cheon*, the Exodus, Jesus-event, etc. We are asking here, what are the common elements amongst historical references? and, ii) what is the common bond which can bind each critically-transcended minjung into one faith? Firstly, minjung theologians should say that

the common ground is the attitude of 'sharing', 'forgiveness', 'love', etc. As they have acknowledged, these things were radically revealed in the teachings of the Reign of God and deeds of Jesus, and these were the expression of Jesus' faith by which he lived and struggled. Then the common ground of critical transcendence on which each minjung depends has to do with the faith of Jesus. Secondly, if each of us can achieve critical transcendence on the basis of the faith of Jesus, this means that 'today' we become one with the spirit of Jesus as the common bond. At this point minjung theologians may argue that the attitude of 'sharing', 'forgiveness', 'love', etc., has been revealed 'in many historical events' apart from the name Jesus. It could be true, but it is a different issue. However if we have to answer Christologically, we are inclined to say that the spirit of Jesus permeates history. We mean that every messianic event has a common element, i.e. it contains the spirit of Jesus. Though minjung theologians argue that they have many messianic events historically, in minjung theology each messianic event is isolated. They place each messianic event one by one in line. But they do not establish the real continuity between these historical events. We would argue that it is the spirit of Jesus in history which gives the continuity between these historical-messianic movements, and embraces them in one.

Lastly, on the one hand, minjung theologians separate



the 'causes' of Jesus from the faith of Jesus who lived two thousand years ago. On the other hand, today, the 'impact' of Jesus is not connected with the spirit of Jesus. Therefore when minjung theology says salvation (critical transcendence) the ground of salvation is i) self-denial and ii) joining to messianic movement, and the basic idea underlying these two aspects is the spirit of sacrifice. In fact, historically, there have been many atheistic humanists who willingly sacrifice themselves for others. If a atheistic humanist achieves self-denial and joins resolutely to minjung movement or to sharing movement, can he be regarded as a *messianic event* in minjung theology? At this point it is practically difficult to suggest any criterion to distinguish minjung theology from atheistic humanism. For minjung theology an urgent task appears how to establish the real continuity between the spirit of Jesus and historical-messianic events.

## Chapter V. Conclusion: The Spirit of Jesus in History

### 1. Different Perspectives--Different Structures and Different Hermeneutics

In the preceding chapters, we have examined the Christologies of Bultmann and the post Bultmannians, of liberation theology and of minjung theology. In their Christologies, two contrasting points appear in accordance with their different concerns, emphases and cultures; one is that their Christological structures are different to one another, and the other is that they operate on different hermeneutical keys to bridge the gap between the historical Jesus and modern man.

#### 1) Different Structures

As we have seen in chapters I and II, the chief concern of Bultmann and the post Bultmannians in their Christologies is to establish the continuity between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith. The underlying methods in their attempts can be characterized as critical historical exegesis and hermeneutics. However, in a sense, their attempt to establish the relationship between the history of Jesus and the Christ of faith is not new. As it is well known, in Europe the credibility of Christian faith itself first came to be seriously

challenged in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries--in the age of the Enlightenment. A chief mark of that period was a new confidence in the power of reason, as opposed to acceptance of authority, to discover truth. The challenge posed by this new outlook entailed conflicts between Enlightenment rationalism and the orthodox belief, particularly concerning the authority of the Bible, the possibility of miracles, and the idea of natural religion and so on. However, after the second half of the eighteenth century, a fresh problem came into the open, which is still the subject of intense debate within theological circles today; this was the problem of the relevance of history in theology. Namely, once the Bible began to be approached as historical material, open to critical historical study, it was natural that the New Testament and the life of Jesus should come to be re-examined. The rise of critical historical thought brought to an end the era of metaphysical consciousness inherited from classical antiquity, which dominated theology until the late seventeenth century. In the age of reason, the attempt to discover the historical figure of Jesus who actually lived in first century Palestine, through the means of the newly established historiographical methods was based upon the presupposition that this real historical figure had become obscured and distorted through the doctrinal presentations of him in the New

Testament.<sup>1</sup> With the rise of historical science, the historical Jesus becomes the Jesus who may be the subject of historical critical research, and the Jesus who may be known as the results of that research. The history of the discussion on the question of the historical Jesus, from the Enlightenment to today, contains several issues, which are closely related to the nature of historical method. For convenience sake, we will look at them in three parts. Firstly, the view of the 'sources' has become one of main concerns for the quest of the historical Jesus. For instance, as a result of the labours of successive generations since the end of the eighteenth century, New Testament research began to set hypotheses to understand the sources in a better way, such as Two Source Theory, Four Source Theory and so on, and in the twentieth century, new literary-historical methods appeared which have come to be known as Form Criticism, Redaction Criticism, Narrative Criticism, etc. Why are the New Testament methods for the study of sources intrinsically connected with the quest of the historical Jesus, and why do they have decisive effects in constructing the figure of Jesus? It is because the New Testament is our most important source for the historical life and works of Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore the debate concerning the

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<sup>1</sup>. Cf. Alasdair I.C.Heron, *A Century of Protestant Theology* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1985), pp. 4f, 18ff. Alister McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology*, pp. 1ff.

sources will not be easily halted, being one of the main issues of New Testament scholarship. Secondly, as the 'historical Jesus' can refer to the Jesus who is constructed by historical critical research, the tension between history and faith becomes acute. Christologically speaking, the historical critical method has made a sharp distinction between the history of Jesus and the Christ of faith. So this issue did not appear in Bultmann or in the Bultmann School. It arose with the first attempt which approached the New Testament through historical critical eyes: generally agreed, with Herman Samuel Reimarus who understood Jesus as an unsuccessful political messianic pretender. Thirdly, if Christian faith in Christ roots in Jesus, and if the historical Jesus can be constructed by historical critical investigation, there appears an issue of absoluteness or uniqueness of the Christian faith. When Ernst Troeltsch characterized the nature of 'historical method' as three features--probability, analogy and correlation, this is more or less still valid to the historical critical methods of modern biblical scholarship. As Troeltsch describes the nature and consequences of historical consciousness and the use of the historical method, a historian can only arrive at a degree of *probability*; the events being investigated are essentially similar in kind to those of which we ourselves have direct experience, *analogy*; every event in history is connected with others, and the whole history is a kind of

network of those inter-relations, *correlation*.<sup>2</sup> If one accepts the nature of 'historical method' as described by Troeltsch, it seems that no religion can be absolute or final. Therefore, it seems hard to hold the idea that any historical phenomenon, including the Christian faith, could be absolutely and universally valid. Here we are not examining how much the argument of Troeltsch is relevant to the quest of the historical Jesus. We are pointing out that every serious theologian in the quest of the historical Jesus must meet the issue of the uniqueness of the historical Jesus and Christian faith. In other words, even though one rejects the characteristic features of historical method described by Troeltsch, the difficulty still remains; if we do not repeat the traditional dogma of Jesus Christ *per se*, but say that the significance of Jesus is to be conceived in purely natural terms, we cannot but ask, 'how can the uniqueness of Jesus be maintained?' We believe that in Europe every theologian who attempts to understand the figure of the historical Jesus and his claims cannot ignore these three issues which we have pointed out: the nature of the sources, relationship between history and faith, and the uniqueness of Christian faith. Therefore it is very natural for Bultmann and his pupils that they first use

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<sup>2</sup>. Cf. Ernst Troeltsch, "Historiography" in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1913), ed. James Hastings, vol.vi, pp. 716-723.

literary-historical method to understand the 'sources' properly. Then their particular attention is paid to establishing the continuity between the history of Jesus and the Christ of faith.<sup>3</sup> As it will be noted, they are reluctant to challenge the uniqueness of Christian faith, i.e. though they know the problem of the uniqueness, they deliberately avoid this issue. This is one of reasons why Bultmann insists that the Christian faith does not depend on historians' labours. Therefore, we would say that the Christologies of Bultmann and his pupils stand in the European Christological tradition which has begun since the Enlightenment. But at the same time this means that their Christological horizon could not transcend the limits of European debates.

The starting point of Boff and Sobrino concerning their Christologies differs from that found Europe. In the process of their liberating exegesis there are two key elements. First of all there is the *lives* of the poor under poverty and oppression. Then there is the Bible which should be read from the perspective of the poor. Therefore, the methodological features of liberation theology which form the hermeneutical circle are i) to re-read the Bible from a new perspective obtained through

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<sup>3</sup>. It is true that Bultmann does not attempt explicitly to establish the continuity between the history of Jesus and the Christ of faith. But, as we have argued in chapter II, he establishes real continuity between the two. Cf. this thesis, pp. 74-83.

contact with the poor as historical reality, and ii) to interpret biblical theme for the praxis of liberating process. This hermeneutical circle determines the character of liberation theology, since liberation theology can be distinguished from other theologies not by its subject but by its perspective and its method.<sup>4</sup> In this sense, the chief aim of liberation theology in its re-interpreting the Bible is to support the liberating praxis and to give theological meaning to it. Therefore, "once liberation theology becomes solely a matter for academic debate, and thereby a subject which merely becomes part of the syllabus, its power is reduced".<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the purpose and foundation of liberating exegesis and Christology lie in re-reading the Bible and Jesus from the perspective of the lives of the poor, and re-interpreting them to enhance the lives of the poor. In this context, liberation theologians argue that they are in the privileged position for this by claiming that the historical situation of Latin America and that of Jesus show striking parallels. If a European theologian criticizes this as an "intuitive approach",<sup>6</sup> he may miss the real matter in liberation Christology. It may be true

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<sup>4</sup>. Cf. Alistair Kee, *Marx and the Failure of Liberation Theology*, p. 189.

<sup>5</sup>. Christopher Rowland and Mark Corner, *Liberating Exegesis: The challenge of Liberation Theology to Biblical Studies* (London: SPCK, 1990), p. 3.

<sup>6</sup>. Cf. Alistair Kee, *Op.cit.*, pp. 223f.



that liberation theologians' comparison between the situation of Latin America and that of Jesus is naïve and crude. However, Sobrino is prepared to admit that there is a fundamental difference between them.<sup>7</sup> The reason why liberation theologians continue to insist that the Bible is understood 'directly' by the poor in Latin America should be found in another place. Their argument should be understood that the living meaning of the Gospels can be grasped directly through the *lives* of the poor. So Sobrino can argue, "Now the gospel speaks to Latin Americans directly. It is not necessary for the gospel to come filtered through and interpreted by some other culture (although this also continues to happen and it has some positive values to it). In virtue of the experience of a 'Jesus near', the poor of Latin America feel this Jesus to be one of them, and they feel they can and should read the gospel".<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the purpose of liberation Christology is not making Christological formulas understandable. The intention is more immediately pastoral, i.e. to support *liberating praxis* in helping the lives of the oppressed. Accordingly, in their Christologies Boff and Sobrino, *like* any other liberation theologians and *unlike* European theologians, have a burden, that they have to link liberating praxis to (the

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<sup>7</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, pp. 389.

<sup>8</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation*, p. 172.

ministry of) Jesus. As we have seen, on the one hand, Boff and Sobrino historicized 'Jesus', and connected the claims and life of Jesus to the historical Jesus (the present impetus of liberating praxis). On the other hand, they connected the apocalyptic element of the reign of God which would be fulfilled by God at the end of history to salvation (the future goal of liberating praxis). Therefore, in the Christologies of Boff and Sobrino a particular attention is paid to establish the continuity between historical liberation and Salvation. Of course it is their great contribution to Christology that they could prove that ordinary people who are engaged in liberating praxis can experience salvation and understand the gospel of Jesus as good news today. This fundamental 'insight' given from the lives of the poor under unjust social structures might give liberation theology a label of 'contextual theology' by saying that 'in the First World, this cannot happen here'. But this insight is a real contribution and challenge of liberation Christology to the Christologies of Europe. Martin Kähler raised a practical question to the Christological debates in Europe about one hundred years ago: the Bible would be understood better by ordinary believers; the whole picture of Christ would appear to the ordinary readers of the Bible, whereas only a very few who can carry on the work of historical

science try to approach to the historical Jesus.<sup>9</sup> Even though Latin American liberation Christology stresses the historical Jesus over the Christ of faith, the warning of Kähler cannot be a challenge to liberation Christology. Rather the underlying idea in Kähler and liberation Christology is the same on the point that when one believes (or follows) the preached Christ (or the cause of Jesus), one can encounter Jesus Christ, i.e. the basis and presupposition of both Kähler and liberation Christology are the acts of believing (Kähler) and praxis (liberation Christology), which convey the same meaning in different expressions. But the warning of Kähler is 'anachronistic' and at the same time still 'valid' to the Christologies of Europe; 'anachronistic', because, in relation to his argument opposing the quest of the historical Jesus, one can ask, can the repetition of Christological dogma influence the life of modern man in the late twentieth century?; 'valid', because he correctly saw that for ordinary believers in the act of believing there is no distinction between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith, i.e. the whole Christ would appear. But now in turn we must put the question to Kähler. 'In Europe, are there many *ordinary believers* who read the Bible and think of the preached Christ as their Lord and practice their

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<sup>9</sup>. Martin Kähler, *The So-called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 3ff, 66.

belief in a post-Christian era? Today, even in non-Christian nations, after the passion of the first Christian generation has faded away, ordinary believers of the second or third generation are asking themselves 'who Jesus actually was', and 'what it means to their lives'. When they stop asking, they give up their belief. It is a theologian's task to give them an answer. In this context we could say that liberation Christology shaped from the 'periphery' can be a real contribution to the Christology of the twentieth century by putting emphasis on following the cause of Jesus, and by illustrating with living models the fact that for the 'ordinary people' in praxis there is no distinction between Jesus and Christ. However, at the academic level, Boff and Sobrino have a task to establish the real continuity between historical liberation and salvation. In fact this problem originates from their Christological orientation and structures, so it would be quite difficult for Boff and Sobrino to establish proper continuity between them. For Boff, on the one hand the reign of God is a utopian hope, which will be realized by God in the future. The image of Jesus in relation to the utopian hope can be seen as very *universal*. But on the other hand Boff is under a pressure to demonstrate how 'discipleship', which is the basis of social praxis, can be successfully connected to Jesus. In spite of the future and apocalyptic element of the reign of God, Boff takes a cause from the life of Jesus--

the solidarity with the poor. This cause of Jesus and following the way of Jesus form the ground of social praxis, i.e. 'discipleship' today can be carried on in social, political and economical dimensions. The image of Jesus in relation to the solidarity with the poor is viewed as *liberator*. Sobrino is also well aware that he has to connect the motive of social praxis with the activities of Jesus. As we have seen, Sobrino dealt with the history of Jesus in several stages. He has particular aims directing his approaches to the history of Jesus in different stages, though this kind of approach is liable to criticism. Firstly, Sobrino intends to solve the problem of the proclaimer and the proclaimed.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, and more importantly, Sobrino attempts to root the 'discipleship' deeply in the second stage of Jesus. In this process he radically historicizes the figure of Jesus, but he does not de-apocalypticize the reign of God. For Sobrino the historicized Jesus is linked with historical liberation, and the apocalyptic element of the reign of God is linked with salvation. For Sobrino, it seems as if Jesus could be understood apart from the reign of God and *vice versa*: "There is no sharply logical relationship between, on the one hand, the reign of God, on the other, Jesus' activity and the exigencies he

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<sup>10</sup>. Cf. this thesis, pp. 175-177.

addresses to his hearers".<sup>11</sup> Boff and Sobrino know that they have to establish the real continuity between historical liberation and salvation. But the dilemma is that they can discard neither liberation nor salvation; since, on the one hand, historical liberation deriving from the historical Jesus gives present motive for the liberating praxis, on the other hand, salvation as the utopian hope supplies the future goal of liberating praxis.

Minjung theologians have realized that the minjung are the permanent reality of history. In connection with the Bible this would mean i) the minjung ('amha'aretz) are partners of the covenant with God in the Old Testament. ii) Jesus identified with the minjung--*ochlos* in Mark.<sup>12</sup> They do not approach Jesus as an individual person, but understand him as a 'messianic event'. However 'messianic' is not a unique character for the Jesus-event. There have been many messianic events and movements before and after Jesus of which the Jesus-event is just one.

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<sup>11</sup>. J. Sobrino, *Spirituality in Liberation*, p. 124.

<sup>12</sup>. It is true that the Gospel of Mark has a very important place in minjung theology, as Exodus, the Gospels, Revelation, etc., are most appreciated in liberation theology. But minjung theologians may not think that it is theologically illegitimate; historically different generations and different social milieu have stressed different books of the Bible. They point out that it is exactly the same idea as that 'the Epistle to the Romans' and 'the Epistle to the Galathians' were particularly favoured by the reformers in the sixteenth century Europe.

Further, some minjung theologians believe that there is no basic difference between the Reign of God in the New Testament, the Second Apocalypse in Tonghak religion, and the Yongwha world in Mayitreya Buddhism. In this way a totally new type of Christology has been formed in Asia. There are largely two reasons why the shape of Christology in Asia is so different: i) First of all Asians have had their own history and philosophical, religious and spiritual traditions which have been established apart from Christianity. When Christianity was introduced into Asia, it was natural that Asians compared it with existing religions. From the outset no one could favour Christianity as being superior to other religions. This means that if the contents of Christianity did not have something unique, in Asian culture no one could argue that the Christian faith is absolute or final. As we have seen, for minjung theologians the Jesus-event and the main themes of the Bible were not fundamentally new. They could find parallels in other religions and in historical minjung movements. ii) Minjung theologians could not imagine that 'God' is confined as the God of Christianity. For them God must be the God of history and universe. They believe that God is not a cripple who was carried piggy-back to Asia by the first foreign missionary. They are convinced that the *will of God*, exactly the same 'will' revealed in Jesus-event, has been revealed in historical minjung movements in their history. So minjung



theologians suggest a criterion to discern the will of God in historical events--the critical transcendence. Accordingly, if a historical event contains the critical transcendence of minjung, it becomes the historical-messianic event. For minjung theology there have been numerous messianic movements in history. In this way the central focus in minjung Christology is to establish continuity between Jesus-event and other historical messianic events. If we compare this with that of Bultmann, the post Bultmannians and liberation theology, the meaning will be clearer. We can say that European culture has been developed along with Christianity, and almost all the 'poor' in Latin America are Christians. Here we mean that in Europe and Latin America there has been no serious challenge by other religions. It has been taken for granted for a long time that 'God' is the God of Christianity. As we have argued, of Bultmann and his pupils, their Christological concern is to establish the continuity between the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ, who is the *Lord of Christians*. In the same idea, for Boff and Sobrino, their Christological concern is to establish the continuity between liberation of Jesus and salvation of God, who is the *God of Christianity*. But in Asia the minjung are not necessarily Christians. Christians are a relative minority in Asia. The Christological concern in minjung theology, therefore, is to establish the continuity between the Jesus-event and



other historical minjung movements, which have happened *without direct references to Jesus Christ and the God of Christianity*. We could say that it is a contribution of minjung Christology that it expands the Christological horizons: it is preparing to be a new Christology to meet a new challenge in the late twentieth century--*a Christology in the pluralistic world*. But as we have pointed out, there is a task for minjung theology, that it has to establish proper continuity between the Jesus-event and other religious-historical minjung movements.

## 2) Different Hermeneutics

In Bultmann, post Bultmannians, liberation theology and minjung theology, we saw that the Christological structures and results were different from each other according to their different perspectives. But there is a common element in them that the historical Jesus takes a central place in their Christologies. All of them in their own way approach the sayings, deeds, life and death of Jesus; they are interested in the historical Jesus who lived two millennia ago in Palestine; they are not content with repeating traditional Christological dogmas. But this does not mean that their concern is to discover the past history of Jesus, who is blocked from us by two thousands years. The crucial concern in their Christologies is to seek what the historical Jesus means *for us today*. Therefore, hermeneutics takes an important

role in their Christologies. But in accordance with their different Christological structures, each develops his own hermeneutics. The following diagram will show the differences clearly between them.

	The Point of Concern in the Historical Jesus	Hermeneutical Key	Modern Man
Bultmann	the claims of Jesus; authentic sayings	preunderstanding & life-relationship	"
Fuchs & Ebeling	the faith of Jesus; what came to expression	faith as word-event	"
Boff & Sobrino	the cause of Jesus; bias to the poor	discipleship; liberating praxis	"
Minjung Theology	Jesus-event as the rise of minjung movement	historical experiences	"

Bultmann's concern in hermeneutics begins with the question, 'how one can find meaning from written texts of past history'. Bultmann first identifies the authentic words of Jesus. But these sayings as mere historical facts cannot give any meaning to us yet, i.e. if one approaches the historical fact as an object outside of history one cannot encounter the meaning from it. Historical phenomena speak only for the subject who meets them in a living way. Bultmann suggests hermeneutical principles-- pre-understanding and life-relationship-- by which one can meet the present demands of history and of

the historical Jesus. However, as he admits, for Bultmann 'hermeneutics' means the art of exegesis, i.e. a method of *interpretation*: we can call this existential interpretation.

The basic concern of Fuchs and Ebeling is the same as Bultmann's on the point that they attempt to bridge the gap between written texts and its meaning today. But for them the most important thing when one meets history is seeking 'what came to expression as word-event in history'. For them 'faith' as word-event was manifest in Jesus. Today faith as word-event is also manifest in the kerygma. They concentrate philosophical and theological significance of the phenomenon of language as a key dimension of existence, and seek in the term 'faith' the linguistic actualization of an understanding of existence shared by Jesus and primitive Christianity.<sup>13</sup> But in general their hermeneutical key works with a similar idea to that of Bultmann; they first identify the authentic *words* and *conduct* of Jesus, though they do not apply form criticism as strictly as Bultmann; then instead of adopting hermeneutical principles used by Bultmann, they seek what came to expression as word-event in 'Jesus' who is outlined by authentic word and conduct of Jesus.

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<sup>13</sup>. Cf. James M. Robinson, "The Formal Structure of Jesus' Message" in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation* (London: SCM, 1962), pp. 91f.

The starting point of hermeneutics in Boff and Sobrino is not 'Jesus', but the 'poor' as historical reality. They first meet the necessity of changing the unjust social structures to enhance the lives of the poor, i.e. the need of liberating praxis. Then they approach Jesus in the New Testament. For them Jesus is primarily viewed as one who showed the partisan love to the poor, and asked us to follow his cause--discipleship. Therefore the only proper way to meet Jesus today is to 'follow' the way of Jesus, i.e. today we encounter Jesus when we are engaged in liberating praxis. In liberation theology, "hermeneutics becomes a hermeneutics of praxis".<sup>14</sup>

For minjung theology 'hermeneutics' is a somewhat unfamiliar term. There have been few minjung theologians who pay any attention to 'hermeneutics'. In Asian culture, traditionally there has been no sharp distinction between transcendence and immanence. 'Time' was also not something which could be measured by a clock, and it was not seen as an infinitely long straight line. The Buddhist terms *Kalpa* (an aeon) and *Ksana* (a moment) are used in everyday life, and they are often not distinguished. In a religious tradition, in which *Tao*(道), meditation and spiritual interchange are emphasized, the gap of space and time is not serious. Therefore, minjung theology could argue simply that; when one joins minjung movements,

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<sup>14</sup>. J.Sobrino, *Christianity at the Crossroads*, p. 35.

he can experience the 'critical transcendence', which unites each minjung event. At this point the hermeneutical key might be viewed as 'praxis' as in liberation theology. It is true that minjung theology is also a doing theology which lays stress on praxis. But there is a difference between liberation theology and minjung theology. For liberation theology the historical reference is only one--Jesus. While, for minjung theology, the historical references are many--historical messianic events. So we could say that the hermeneutical key in minjung theology is *historical experiences*, which were experienced in the Jesus event and at the same time in other historical minjung movements. By these common historical experiences in history, minjung theology could argue that there is a continuity between Jesus-event and other historical messianic events: the rise of a Messianic movement by Jesus' followers and historical movements continually happening by minjung.

## 2. History and Faith

It has been suggested by some critics that Bultmann turned to the existential view of history because the results of his scientific historical research were so negative;<sup>15</sup> or, historical study has no positive significance for faith in the thought of Bultmann;<sup>16</sup> or, there is a wide gulf between historical study and the kerygma theology in Bultmann which he cannot bridge.<sup>17</sup> This misunderstanding is due to a clash of two extreme approaches: On the one hand Bultmann is understood as a pioneer of form criticism, whose results, if misunderstood, make the quest of the historical Jesus difficult. On the other hand, Bultmann is understood as an existential theologian, who tries to demythologize the New Testament and lays stress on the kerygmatic Christ. Accordingly, the Christology of Bultmann is understood by many scholars as distinguishing sharply between the

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<sup>15</sup>. James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM, 1959), p. 12. Cf. John Macquarrie, *The Scope of Demythologizing: Bultmann and his Critics* (London: SCM, 1960), pp. 64f.

<sup>16</sup>. Hermann Diem, *Dogmatics* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), pp. 90f.

<sup>17</sup>. Paul Althaus, *The So-called Kerygma and the Historical Jesus* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), pp. 43-46.

historical Jesus and the Christ of faith, without establishing real continuity between the two.<sup>18</sup> In chapter I, we have focused our investigation on the views that i) the results of Bultmann's historical research are not a hindrance to the quest of the historical Jesus, and ii) the claims of the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith are identical. In this section, we will focus on five points: Firstly, we will examine Bultmann's view of the sources and particularly that of his critics, since the correct understanding of Bultmann's view on source material is critical to understanding Bultmann's Christology. Wittingly or unwittingly, most of the critics, who argue that Bultmann is not interested in the historical Jesus, labour under a misapprehension concerning the results of Bultmann's form criticism. Secondly, if Bultmann's view of sources in the quest of the historical Jesus is not negative, we will see whether in Bultmann's Christology there is a point of contact between history and faith; this must be understood as a real contribution of Bultmann. Thirdly, we will attempt to understand then why Bultmann still argues that faith does not depend on historian's work. Fourthly, we will evaluate the works of Käsemann, Fuchs and Ebeling; we also

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<sup>18</sup>. G. Jones sees even 'three Jesuses' in Bultmann; the historical Jesus who lived and died on earth, the Jesus who lives and dies in stories, and the risen Lord or Christ of faith. But Jones does not establish proper continuity between them. Cf. *Bultmann: Towards a Critical Theology* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), pp. 34ff.

see the theology of James P. Mackey briefly in the relation to the post Bultmannians. Finally, we will examine the meaning of uniqueness of the Christian faith raised by Bultmann, his pupils and minjung theology.

1. Let us examine the critics of Bultmann's view of the sources and his form criticism largely from the New Testament circle. The criticisms can be summarized in three ways: Firstly, there is the unspecific but popular view, i.e. the results of Bultmann's form criticism are so negative that nothing of the life of Jesus is knowable.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly this view argues that the 'new quest' for the historical Jesus arose out of dissatisfaction with conclusions drawn by Bultmann from his form-critical studies.<sup>20</sup> Consciously or unconsciously this view often implies that i) the 'old quest' failed to reconstruct the historical Jesus, and that ii) it is no longer possible to write a biography of Jesus since the rise of form criticism. The first issue is outside our concern at this moment; it is suffice to say that there can be some theologians who have different views on the original

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<sup>19</sup>. Alisdair I.C. Heron, *Op.cit.*, p. 101.  
Ben F. Meyers, *The Aims of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1979), pp. 49f. James M. Robinson, *Ibid.*, p. 12

<sup>20</sup>. Graham N. Stanton, "Form Criticism Revisited", in *What about the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1975), eds. M. Hooker and C. Hicking, p. 14. V.A. Harvey, *Op. cit.*, p. 167.



quest.<sup>21</sup> The second issue has nothing to do with Bultmann's view of sources in the strict sense, since Bultmann had no intention to construct a biography of Jesus from his sources. Bultmann is well aware that the sources are not suitable for biography in the *modern sense* of the word, even though the four Gospels and Acts have strong biographical elements from the perspective of Jesus' time.<sup>22</sup> Instead Bultmann believes that he can understand the purpose of Jesus.

Secondly, there is the view which argues that form critics neglect to examine sufficiently the relationship between oral and written tradition, and the development and use of writing in the early church. Recently the assumption that there was an 'oral period' before any of the gospel material came to be written down has been questioned by some scholars.<sup>23</sup> M.Hooker argues, "It [form

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<sup>21</sup>. It is true that New Testament methods were stimulated and developed by the old quest, i.e. this can be positive side. Cf. R.Bultmann "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels", pp. 11ff. James P. Mackey understands that there are also positive elements in the old quest. Cf. *Jesus the Man and the Myth* (London: SCM, 1979), p. 12.

<sup>22</sup>. Hengel and Stanton argue that it is difficult to make a sharp distinction between ancient history and biography. The Gospels must be read against the backdrop, not of modern biographical writing, but of their own times. There is no doubt that within sixty or seventy years of their composition many Christian readers of the Gospels did read them as biographies. Graham N. Stanton, *The Gospels and Jesus* (Oxford: University Press, 1989), pp. 18-19. Martin Hengel, *Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM, 1986), pp. 8-20.

<sup>23</sup>. R.C.Barbour, *Traditio-Historical Criticism of the Gospels* (London: SPCK, 1972), p. 1. Stephen H. Travis, "Form Criticism", in *New Testament Interpretation* (Exeter:

criticism] cannot tell us anything about the material itself and its reliability.... Nor can form-criticism tell us about the history of the material before it took its present shape".<sup>24</sup> This critic may be correct at this point that form criticism does not explain the relationship of oral and written traditions sufficiently. However, form-criticism is not devised for this purpose. Bultmann states;

The aim of form-criticism is to determine *the original form* of a piece of narrative, a dominical saying or a parable. In the process we learn to distinguish secondary additions and forms, and these in turn lead to important results for *the history of the tradition*.<sup>25</sup>

As far as the objective of form criticism is concerned, no scholar denies that it is a useful tool.<sup>26</sup> Hooker admits this; "form criticism has established itself as an invaluable tool which can tell us a great deal about the history of the gospel material".<sup>27</sup> Therefore we would

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The Paternoster Press, 1985), 2nd ed., ed. I. Howard Marshall, p. 159.

<sup>24</sup>. M.D.Hooker, "On Using the Wrong Tool", in *Theology*, vol. 75, 1972, p. 573.

<sup>25</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Op.cit.*, p. 6. Italics added.

<sup>26</sup>. R.C.Barbour, *Op.cit.*, p. 18. David L.Mealand, "The Dissimilarity Test", in *Scottish Journal of Theology*, vol. 31, 1978, p. 43.

<sup>27</sup>. M.D.Hooker, "Christology and Methodology", in *New Testament Studies*, vol. 17, 1971, p. 485.

argue that the second sort of critic is only pointing out the limit of form criticism.

The third kind of criticism focuses on the test of dissimilarity of form criticism, i.e. that a genuine saying of Jesus should be distinctively different from Judaism and from early Christianity. This raises two further issues; i) the knowledge of first-century Judaism and the Church between 70 and 100 CE is not perfect.<sup>28</sup> Hooker argues, "Use of this criterion seems to assume that we are dealing with two known factors (Judaism and early Christianity) and one unknown--Jesus: it would perhaps be a fairer statement of the situation to say that we are dealing with three unknowns".<sup>29</sup> The objectors are right to point out that we do not have complete pictures of first century Judaism or early Christianity. However, as far as our knowledge is concerned, we have more information about Judaism and early Christianity than about Jesus.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, we agree with Mealand in saying that "we can work from the somewhat better known to the rather more obscure".<sup>31</sup> ii) The second issue is that form

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<sup>28</sup>. E.P.Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM, 1985), P. 16.

<sup>29</sup>. M.D.Hooker, "Christology and Methodology", p. 482.

<sup>30</sup>. For example, recently there are some attempt to understand Jesus in the category of Judaism. cf. G.Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (London: Collins, 1973), *Jesus and the World of Judaism* (London: SCM, 1983). E.P.Sanders, *Op.cit.*

<sup>31</sup>. D.L.Mealand, *Op.cit.*, p. 45.

criticism can eliminate the authentic sayings of Jesus which are paralleled in the Jewish tradition on the one hand and which reflect the faith, practice and the situation of the post-Easter church as we know them from outside the Gospels. This criticism is valid, since Jesus may have agreed either with Judaism or with early Christian teaching or both, i.e. there can be an area of overlap. Therefore the strict use of the test of dissimilarity without the aid of other tests can cause a problem; either it separates Jesus from his contemporary Jews, or it eliminates the material which could possibly be common to Jesus and the Church, and which may explain the continuity between them.<sup>32</sup> Bultmann is well aware of this weak point in form criticism. Therefore he uses the test of dissimilarity with the help of the test of coherence.<sup>33</sup> Further, New Testament scholars have developed several more tests along with that of dissimilarity, such as--'coherence',<sup>34</sup> multiple Forms,<sup>35</sup> and

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<sup>32</sup>. M.D.Hooker, *The son of Man in Mark* (London: SPCK, 1967), p. 7. R.C.Barbour, *Op.cit.*, pp. 6-8. R.H.Fuller, *The Foundation of New Testament Christology* (London: Lutterworth, 1965), p. 18.

<sup>33</sup>. R. Bultmann, *Op.cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>34</sup>. J.Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1971). p. 30. Norman Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus*, p. 43.

<sup>35</sup>. C.H.Dodd, *History and the Gospel* (New York: Scribner's, 1937), pp. 91-101. R.H.Stein, "The Criteria for Authenticity", in *Gospel Perspectives* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1980), eds. R.T.France, and D.Wenham, vol. I, pp. 232-33.

'tradition contrary to editorial tendency'.<sup>36</sup> In any case, there is one area of agreement which unites defenders and opponents of form criticism; namely, that form criticism tends to lead to minimal rather than maximal results,<sup>37</sup> i.e. "a critically tested minimum of sayings".

Let us return to our main argument. Many critics fail to prove that Bultmann's view on sources and the results of form criticism are sceptical. Rather, the *History of the Synoptic Tradition* shows that "the primary layer of the tradition is the authentic Jesus tradition, his words, work and fate".<sup>38</sup> As we have seen in the *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, in fact, Bultmann locates more original sayings of Jesus than his critics could expect. Of course, these sayings suggested by Bultmann can be a 'critically tested minimum'. Nevertheless, Bultmann does not doubt that he can understand the 'purpose' of Jesus by these sayings. Therefore we do not think that Bultmann turned to the existential view of history because the

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<sup>36</sup>. D.G.A.Calvert, "An Examination of the Criterion for Distinguishing the Authentic Words of Jesus", *New Testament Studies*, vol.18, 1972, pp. 209-19. Cf. C.F.D.Moule, *The Phenomenon of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1967), pp. 56-76.

<sup>37</sup>. R.H.Fuller, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament* (London: Duckworth, 1966), p. 96. Norman Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus*, p. 43. D.C.Mealand, *Op.cit.*, p. 42. M.D.Hooker, "Christology and Methodology", pp. 481f. R.C.Barbour, *Op.cit.*, pp. 6f.

<sup>38</sup>.R.H.Fuller, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 94.

results of his form criticism were so negative.<sup>39</sup>

2. In chapter I, we compared the message of the historical Jesus with the Christ of the Kerygma. We saw that the interpretation of the sayings of Jesus operates according to the same system as that of the kerygma; i) in both cases, the final goal is salvation in opposition to man-made security, i.e. sin. The call to decision means to encounter God who will end unauthentic life. ii) Both radically demand a decision here and now. iii) Both demonstrate that by decision man can be free from the unauthentic life and experience salvation.

It is true that there is a general New Testament problem between 'the proclaimer' and 'the proclaimed'. However, as Bultmann admits, the proclamation of Jesus already implied a Christology. Furthermore, the synoptic tradition has shown that the emphasis gradually turned from the preaching to the person of Jesus. But in the early stage the preaching and the person had the same meaning to Jesus' followers. Therefore, for the followers of Jesus the Easter faith meant to realize the true meaning of the cross: "*The Cross*, so to say, raised the

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<sup>39</sup>. Macquarrie and Thielicke correctly understand that Bultmann maintains a thoroughly rigid continuity of thought and even of terminology. Cf. J. Macquarrie, *Op.cit.*, pp. 64ff. H.Thielicke, "Reflection on Bultmann's Hermeneutic", in *The Expository Times*, 1956, LXVII, p. 154.

question of decision once more".<sup>40</sup> Besides, Bultmann acknowledges that the sign of salvation is *Jesus himself*. We conclude that i) for the followers of Jesus the preaching of the kerygmatic Christ was rooted in the historical Jesus. When the followers of Jesus preached the person of Jesus (faith in Jesus), the meaning was the same as that of the proclamation of Jesus. For them the Christ of Kerygma means the historical Jesus. ii) Today if we gain access to the historical Jesus by historical investigation, though this may not be easy, the meaning is the same as to meet the Christ in preaching.

To make sure, one may ask whether a modern historian can meet the historical Jesus, or whether he can make a correct decision from the sayings of Jesus. Bultmann should say 'yes'. In the introduction of *Jesus and the Word* Bultmann explains how he as a historian approaches the history of Jesus, and discusses his experience of his encounter with history.<sup>41</sup> The thesis of his book, he affirms, is that we can discover the demands of the historical Jesus for the present time: "Attention is entirely limited to what he *purposed*, and hence to what in his purpose as a part of history makes a present demand on us".<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>. R.Bultmann, *New Testament Theology*, vol.I, p. 44. Underline added.

<sup>41</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>42</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 8. Underline added.



The fact that both the historical investigation and the preaching of faith can arrive at the same result means that history and faith do not belong to two mutually exclusive fields. This means that there is a point of contact between history and faith. This is Bultmann's real contribution to the quest of the historical Jesus since the Enlightenment; he could show that the historical critical research does not destroy the Christian faith; rather history and faith can arrive at the same point. In this sense we argue that Harvey is wrong when he concludes, "It seems clear that Bultmann has not solved the problem of faith and history, and that his attempt to do so falls either into formlessness on the one hand or into contradiction on the other".<sup>43</sup>

3.1. Though Bultmann shows the real continuity between the history of Jesus and the Christ of faith, he says that the object of faith is the Christ of the kerygma, not the historical Jesus. He states, "...and faith, being personal decision, cannot be dependent upon a historian's labour".<sup>44</sup> It is quite complicated to understand the exact intention of Bultmann here, but we assume that there are several reasons for this.

It seems that Bultmann uses the term 'history' in two

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<sup>43</sup>. V.A.Harvey, *Op.cit.*, p. 146.

<sup>44</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.I, p. 26. Underline added.



ways. On the one hand, 'history' is understood in relation to historical positivism, in which the whole of history--what happened in the past-- can be known with objective certainty 'as it really happened'. When Bultmann uses 'history' in this sense, in the sense of empirical science, the impression is negative. Bultmann is convinced that when one meets history in the subject-object pattern he misses the essence of history; "'being in itself' is an illusion of an objectivising type of thinking which is proper in natural science but not in history".<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, for Bultmann what is characteristic of history is that "an ultimate distinction between the knower and his object cannot be maintained".<sup>46</sup> One has to meet history in a living way, then history speaks to him here and now. Bultmann calls this attitude an existential view of history. Therefore Bultmann does not doubt that by hermeneutical principles one can encounter the *present* demands of history. For Bultmann "*the meaning in history lies always in the present*".<sup>47</sup> This means allowing oneself to be examined by history, and hearing the claims it makes; particularly, when history reveals a possibility of human existence, the decision of the exegete is demanded. In this manner, like faith,

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<sup>45</sup>. R.Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, p. 121.

<sup>46</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>47</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

history can be a matter of *being personal decision*. As we argued in chapter I, if one encounters history in a proper way, Bultmann does not deny that the meaning of history and that of faith are not contradictory to each other. Therefore we could say; Bultmann's view that faith does not depend upon historian's labour can mean, though not always, that he rejects historical positivism or the use of historical facts in the sense of empirical science as means to secure faith.<sup>48</sup> In fact when Bultmann uses the term history in a negative way, he often uses it with other words such as 'mere historical facts', 'past history', 'objectivity', etc. which insinuate positivistic view of history.

Then the next question may be like this: if historians meet the history of Jesus in a living way, does Bultmann agree that they do not have to hear the claims of the kerygma? Bultmann would *not* agree! Bultmann's disagreement is not due to the fact that the claims of the historical Jesus and that of the Kerygma are different. Rather, because they can be the same, he could not agree; here Bultmann has a 'dilemma' as he calls it.<sup>49</sup> Let us see what his dilemma means;

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<sup>48</sup>. Cf. James P. Mackey, *Modern Theology: A Sense of Direction* (Oxford: University Press, 1987), pp. 5-6. Heinrich Ott, "Rudolf Bultmann's Philosophy of History", in *The Theology of Rudolf Bultmann* (London: SCM, 1966), ed. C.W. Kegley, p. 56.

<sup>49</sup>. R. Bultmann, "The Primitive Kerygma and the Historical Jesus", p. 38, footnote 73.

If a genuine interpretation of history makes the "now" of yesterday the "now" of today, if for that reason the historian, on the basis of his existential encounter with Jesus' history, can lead his hearers (or readers) to a situation where they must decide for or against him, then has not the Christ-kerygma lost its meaning, has it not become superfluous?<sup>50</sup>

As the above quotation shows, if a historian could not encounter the claims of the historical Jesus, Bultmann would not have the dilemma. Here Bultmann worries that the Christ of the kerygma might be superfluous. For Bultmann this issue again raises another problem--the nature of the historical method. If the historical Jesus can be saving event, because the quest of the historical Jesus is open to historical investigation, the saving event itself *can be* judged by historical investigation (this does not mean that the saving event *should be* judged as to its validity by historical critical research). Bultmann, of course, does not deny the validity of historical investigation. But he is against any *objective guarantee* to secure faith. He is convinced that each historical investigation cannot give a consistent result; "historical research can never lead to any result which could serve as a basis for faith, for *all its results have only relative validity*. How widely the pictures of Jesus presented by liberal theologians

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<sup>50</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

differ from one another! How uncertain is all knowledge of 'the historical Jesus'!"<sup>51</sup> Now we reach the core of problem. One of characteristic features of historical method is 'probability'. The results of historical research can often be approximate and relative. Bultmann is well aware that in the eyes of history not only the historical Jesus but also Christianity itself is one relative phenomenon among others.<sup>52</sup> But he has no intention of undermining the uniqueness and finality of Christian faith. The point is that for Bultmann the basis of faith should be 'absolute'. Is it possible? For Bultmann it seems that it is possible only when 'faith' is made insecure. Bultmann refers to the *sola fide* of Luther in regard to this insecurity of faith and has brought historical research into line with the Reformation understanding of faith.<sup>53</sup> In relation to 'justification by faith alone', Bultmann places law (works) and historical research (objectifying knowledge) in the same category versus faith; "demythologizing is a task parallel to that performed by Paul and Luther in their doctrine of justification by faith alone without the works of law.

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<sup>51</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Faith and Understanding*, p. 30.

<sup>52</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Essays: Philosophical and Theological*, p. 19.

<sup>53</sup>. Cf. Hermann Diem, *Op.cit.*, p. 90. At this point Barth is right that "Bultmann's work is inconceivable apart from his Lutheran background". Karl Barth, "Rudolf Bultmann--An Attempt to Understand Him", in *Kerygma and Myth*, vol.II, p. 123.

More precisely, de-mythologizing is the radical application of the doctrine of Justification by faith to the sphere of knowledge and thought. Like the doctrine of Justification, de-mythologizing destroys every longing for security. There is no difference between security based on good works and security built on objectifying knowledge".<sup>54</sup> This is the limitation of Bultmann; when he faces the problem of the uniqueness of Christian faith challenged by history he returns to the slogan of the Reformers. Therefore here a question remains in Bultmann, 'can the finality of Christian faith be maintained by claiming *sola fide*?'

3.2. Bultmann's form criticism makes the old quest no longer simple or easy, but it is also Bultmann who opens a new way for the quest for the historical Jesus. The Christology of Bultmann raises several questions which Bultmann does not solve properly. Firstly, if faith is a new obedience,<sup>55</sup> if "faith is a new understanding of existence",<sup>56</sup> if "faith is from the outset an ontological possibility of man",<sup>57</sup> and if the coming of this faith is

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<sup>54</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology*, p. 84.

<sup>55</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Faith and Understanding*, p. 64.

<sup>56</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth*, vol.I, p.202.

<sup>57</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Existence and Faith*, p. 108.

the dawn of a new self-understanding,<sup>58</sup> can we think that 'what Jesus purposed' was to enhance this faith, as the Man of Faith? Bultmann leaves this unexplained. This issue comes to the forefront for his pupils--Fuchs and Ebeling, while Käsemann attempts to find the voice of the historical Jesus in Paul and John; our assessment for their works will follow (4.1). Secondly, the interest of Bultmann is concentrated primarily on human existence, and his guiding hermeneutical principle is the individual's question about himself. Therefore the criticism that the kerygma should be interpreted not only in the individual, but also in the socio-political dimension, is valid.<sup>59</sup> We already saw in chapter III that liberation theologians of Latin America attempt to find what the Bible says to us in our socio-political situation. While liberation theologians put social praxis on the basis of personal decision of each individual (discipleship), they attempt to prove that socio-economic activity can be a mediation of God, i.e. we can experience salvation not only in the Christian message, but also in historical actuality. Thirdly, the first issue above raises further questions. If "God did indeed declare His will in the Old

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<sup>58</sup>. R.Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), p. 317.

<sup>59</sup>. Cf. Dorothy Soelle, *Political Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), pp. 59ff.

Testament,"<sup>60</sup> and if man has a possibility to recover his authentic life, can he do it without reference to Jesus Christ? This issue has been focused by some left wing critics of Bultmann such as F.Buri and S.Ogden. However, like Bultmann, their interest is concentrated solely on the existence of the individual with the conviction that a human being has the potential possibility to be an authentic being without reference to Jesus Christ. As we have seen in chapter IV, this issue is tackled 'historically' by some Asian theologians, since on the one hand they already have their own historical messianic figures, on the other hand Christianity was introduced to them only one or two hundred years ago. This issue is also involved with the 'uniqueness' of Christian faith. We will examine the meaning of the uniqueness of christian faith in the pluralistic world.(5.1)

4.1. As far as the quest of the historical Jesus is concerned the works of Käsemann, Fuchs and Ebeling are not fundamentally new when compared to Bultmann. They concentrated on the issues which Bultmann left unfinished. In this sense, we could say that they attempted to complete a circle which Bultmann began. Fuchs and Ebeling attempt to overcome a troublesome issue in the quest for the historical Jesus--the process of the transition from

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<sup>60</sup>. R.Bultmann, *New Testament Theology*, vol.I, p. 16.



the 'proclaimer' to the 'proclaimed'. For this matter we can say that their attempts are successful. However the base on which they attempt to bridge the gap between the teaching of Jesus and the proclamation of church is quite a small one--'faith' as the linguistic actualization of an understanding of existence which is common in Jesus and primitive Christianity.<sup>61</sup> Today we meet Jesus as the word in which his faith is contained. When we encounter this word, we do not need any aid to understanding. The word itself has a hermeneutic function, and Jesus' word--not the Easter kerygma--happens as recurring word today in the church's proclamation.<sup>62</sup> Therefore for Fuchs and Ebeling it is not clear whether a modern man can encounter the 'faith' of Jesus outside the Christian written texts and proclamation of the Church which contain the faith and decision of Jesus. Further, they have proved that 'faith' was expressed in Jesus, and this faith has been continued by his followers. But they do not suggest how and in what manner the faith of Jesus is expressed in Paul and John. On the other hand, Käsemann attempts to connect the spirit, which is a unique element of Jesus in the Synoptics, to the Spirit in Pauline theology and in the

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<sup>61</sup>. Cf. V.A. Harvey, *Op.cit.*, p, 177. James M.Robinson, "The Formal Structure of Jesus' Message", pp. 91f.

<sup>62</sup>. G.Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, p. 318. Cf. James M.Robinson, "Hermeneutic Since Barth", in *The New Hermeneutic*, p. 62.



Gospel of John. However, Käsemann, as a New Testament scholar, does not develop this theme any further. There is a lack of concreteness in Käsemann's attempt to connect the spirit of Jesus with the Spirit in Pauline theology for two reasons: i) Käsemann does not make it clear whether 'the spirit' can be the personal faith of Jesus or not. ii) Even though the spirit of Jesus can be identified successfully with the Spirit in Paul (although in fact Käsemann does not make this point clear), Käsemann does not link the spirit of Jesus with the main themes of Pauline theology.

4.2. The issues raised by Käsemann, Fuchs and Ebeling are focused and developed by another systematic theologian. On behalf of a conclusion of section 4.1, we will examine briefly the points raised in this section; James P. Mackey believes that the life of Jesus as evidenced in his parables, meals, prayers, miracles, and deeds reveals the 'faith of Jesus'.<sup>63</sup> Jesus cherished all life and existence as God's precious gift. He accepted all and served their needs, and so enabled and inspired them to discover the treasure hidden in their own lives.

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<sup>63</sup>. Mackey argues that the New Testament talks of the faith of Jesus in texts such as Gal. 2:16, Rom. 3:26, Hebrews 2:5,11, etc, and that this kind of faith cannot be taught, but can only spread by contagion. In other words, only carriers of faith can truly give it to others. See, "The Faith of the Historical Jesus", *Horizons*, vol.III, 1976, pp. 165f. *Jesus the Man and the Myth*, pp. 168-169.

"Such, then, is the life of Jesus, the only life of Jesus of any interest to the world. Such is the historical Jesus, who can be discovered at the end of any quest, old or new".<sup>64</sup> In other words, the faith of Jesus is precisely the acknowledgement of God as giver of self, others and world.<sup>65</sup> This faith of Jesus is expressed in relation to inaugurating the reign of God.<sup>66</sup> The faith of Jesus exemplified in his life inspired similar faith in those with whom he came into contact, so that they in turn could inspire others.

On the other hand, Paul continued the central elements in the public ministry of Jesus. Mackey demonstrates that the central themes of Paul-- faith, grace, spirit, life and his service, etc.-- stand in complete continuity with Jesus' proclamation of the reign of God and its meaning.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, for Paul 'living by faith' does not mean only 'faith in Jesus', but the same faith by which Jesus lived and which he tried to inspire in all who would follow him.

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<sup>64</sup>. James P. Mackey, *Jesus the Man and the Myth*, p. 171.

<sup>65</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>66</sup>. From the parables of Jesus, Mackey suggests key elements of the reign of God; 'it is available to us in this world', 'Joy at the discovery of what is already there', 'quick and correct decision', 'the cost can be higher than we expect', 'offensive to our presuppositions and priorities', 'hope', etc. And it is life which we can discover with great joy. Therefore, to discover life, always already there and offered for our acceptance, means to see life as a gift or as grace. *Ibid.*, pp. 128ff.

<sup>67</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 173-204.

For Paul the resurrection of Jesus means primarily the Christian experience of Jesus as Spirit or Lord in the lives of his followers, i.e. the resurrection is a symbolic expression of the significance of Jesus' death. Therefore when Paul says that Jesus is risen, this signifies that Jesus is the Lord or the spirit in his life and in the lives of his converts.<sup>68</sup> Paul uses the word 'spirit' to express God's presence and action in and through Jesus. Therefore, to say that Jesus was spirit is a way of confessing that God was present and active in Jesus.<sup>69</sup> In this manner, in linking the central themes of Jesus' ministry to that of Paul, Mackey establishes the material continuity between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith. Lastly, Mackey objects to any kind of dichotomy between history and faith. By connecting the faith of Jesus with the Spirit in Paul on the one hand, by expanding the conceptions of 'faith' and 'history' on the other hand,<sup>70</sup> he opens a possibility for modern man to encounter the spirit of Jesus not only in Christian

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<sup>68</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 87,97,104.

<sup>69</sup>. James P. Mackey, *The Christian Experience of God as Trinity* (London:SCM, 1983), pp. 76-77.

<sup>70</sup>. For Mackey, human knowledge in its primordial and its most universal structure can be called 'faith': while 'history' is that form of knowing which most clearly mirrors the historical nature of existence and the temporality of being. Cf. James P. Mackey, *Modern Theology: A Sense of Direction*, pp. 14ff, particularly p. 16. See also for more detail argument about the relationship between faith and history *Jesus the Man and the Myth*, pp. 248-267.

message but also in 'history': Today the distinctive faith of Jesus, the life-giving spirit, is woven into the very texture of our historical experience. Our historical experience could itself be the very source of our faith in the God who created it and gave it to us. In this sense, "Jesus is Lord of history",<sup>71</sup> and can be encountered by historical research and by historical experience.

5.1. The quest of the historical Jesus can raise the question of the uniqueness of the historical Jesus, and therefore the absoluteness of the Christian faith. As Bultmann returned to *sola fide*, when he faced the problem of finality of Christian faith raised by historical critical research, some critics against the quest of the historical Jesus believe that it eventually undermines the uniqueness of Christianity.<sup>72</sup> It is beyond the compass of this thesis to deal with the issue of uniqueness of Christian faith in comparison with other great world faiths. Here we will point out just two things in the light of minjung theology; firstly, even though Christianity depends on its traditional dogmas, today it does not guarantee the uniqueness of Christianity. Secondly, the quest of the historical Jesus does not necessarily destroy the uniqueness of Christianity.

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<sup>71</sup>. James P. Mackey, *Jesus the Man and the Myth*, p. 264.

<sup>72</sup>. Cf. Paul Althaus, *Op.cit.*, p. 67.

i) The problem of history has been one of main subjects in theology since the nineteenth century, but two more problems have appeared from the second half of the twentieth century. One is about the relationship between the historical Jesus and representations of him as having been of another colour,<sup>73</sup> sex,<sup>74</sup> and culture. The other is, often related to the first issue, that Christianity cannot ignore any more the existence of other religions, as Bowden says, "Like Mount Everest, religious diversity is there".<sup>75</sup> The birth of minjung theology has to do with both above issues; its historical background and culture are different from that of Europe, and it stands in the midst of a multi-religious world. Though a quite conservative line of Christianity was introduced into Korea, the traditional Christology of a once-for-all figure of Christ could not be maintained. For minjung theology there have been many messianic figures in history, and the radical

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<sup>73</sup>. For example, James Cone argues that only black Christ can really enter into their world where the despised, the poor and the black are. Cf. *God of the Oppressed* (New York: The Seabury Press 1975), pp. 135-137.

<sup>74</sup>. Rosemary Ruether argues that there are the maleness of Christ and the maleness of God behind traditional Christology and the doctrine of God: and these dogmas can be used against women. Cf. *To Change the World: Christology and Cultural Criticism* (London: SCM, 1981), pp. 45-46. Canon H. Montefiore suggests that one cannot rule out a possibility that Jesus had homosexual inclinations. Cf. *For God's Sake* (London: Collins, 1969), p. 182.

<sup>75</sup>. John Bowden, *Jesus: The Unanswered Questions* (London: SCM, 1988), p. 177.

and universal character of God's grace did not occur exclusively in Jesus.<sup>76</sup> Christianity has claimed that it is 'unique'. But not only minjung theology but also recent studies of comparative religions show that the main doctrines of Christianity--such as Trinity, Atonement, Incarnation-- are not unique: there are parallels in other religions.<sup>77</sup> We agree that comparative studies of religions are still at an elementary level and their results may be superficial. But for Buddhists and Hindus, for example, Christianity can be looked on as a different or Western religion, but not unique nor superior to their religions. As John Hick hinted, we can see how far

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<sup>76</sup>. In Europe Ogden, Buri and Harvey have similar views though different motives. They believe that there is no fundamental difference between an existential philosophy and the Christian message. They do not agree with Bultmann's argument; man is a totally fallen being; man cannot save himself, therefore an enabling act of grace of God in Jesus Christ is needed; the philosopher is confusing a theoretical possibility with an actual one. (*Kerygma and Myth*, vol.I, pp. 28ff.) Ogden, Buri and Harvey argue that if one cannot liberate himself by his own efforts, if the grace of God was revealed 'only' in Jesus, there can be some problems: i) This ignores the universal character of God's grace. ii) We cannot ask any responsibility on human beings if they have no 'actual possibility'. iii) All the men who lived before Jesus were not responsible for realizing 'possibility in principle'. Cf. S.Ogden, *Op.cit.*, pp. 138f, 144ff. F. Buri. *Kerygma und Mythos* (Hamburg: Herbert Reich-Evangelischer Verlag, 1952), ed. H.W.Bartsch, vol. II, p. 94. V.A.Harvey. *Op.cit.*, pp. 145-146, 166.

<sup>77</sup>. For example, John Hick and Aloysius Pieris see that Christology and Buddhology have much of similarities. "Jesus and the World Religions", in *The Myth of God Incarnate* (London: SCM, 1977), ed. John Hick, pp. 167. "The Buddha and The Christ: Mediators of Liberation", in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness* (London: SCM, 1988), eds. John Hick and P.F.Knitter, pp. 162ff.

Christianity has been 'unique' from its past history; if we do not at present command the conceptual precision or the exhaustive information necessary for objective comparative judgement between religions, we can see how much Christianity has influenced the lives of human beings. It is difficult to draw conclusions about this issue. But according to Hick, Christianity has not been superior to other world religions in this regard.<sup>78</sup> Christianity always runs the risk of being turned into a less than desirable ideology, as any religion can be used by the power for to support ruling system; Christianity used to be a ruling ideology since Constantine; for Constantine the figure of Christ became caught up in the Roman imperial ideology, and recently the Christian superiority complex supported and sanctified the Western imperialistic exploitation of what today we call the Third World.<sup>79</sup> The Christian superiority ideology has well expressed one of its formulas, '*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*'. Of course this attitude of the Church is changing; the Second Vatican Council consolidated the new thinking that had been taking place for a number of years among

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<sup>78</sup>. John Hick, "The Non-Absoluteness of Christianity", in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, pp. 23ff.

<sup>79</sup>. John Bowden, *Op. cit.*, pp. 18, 127. For a thorough discussion about the relationship between Constantine and Christianity, see Alistair Kee, *Constantine versus Christ* (London: SCM, 1982). Kee argues that Constantine was not a Christian and that the sign in which he conquered was not the cross of Christ but a political symbol of his own making. Cf. pp. 18-22.



some of the more adventurous Roman Catholic theologians.<sup>80</sup> Vatican II declared that there is salvation outside the visible Church; namely, the possibility of salvation was officially extended in principle to the whole world. But Hick criticizes that; it does not mean that Christianity gives up its superiority ideology; Vatican II means a change from old exclusivism to what is today generally called inclusivism, not to pluralism.<sup>81</sup> At any rate, for those who stand in other religious faiths it seems that it is no longer persuasive and plausible to claim the uniqueness of Christian faith from its doctrines and from its past history. If Christians today claim the absoluteness of their religion, it may be 'relative absoluteness' valid only within Christianity.

2) But this does not mean that Christians should give up the 'uniqueness' of Christian faith. Even though minjung theology and other Christians in other religious traditions<sup>82</sup> believe that there have been many messianic figures in history, they agree that the historical Jesus

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<sup>80</sup>. For example, Karl Rahner, who developed the idea of 'anonymous Christian', argued that non-christian religions could be vehicles of salvation. Cf. *Theological Investigation* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966), vol.5, pp. 115ff.

<sup>81</sup>. John Hick, "The Non-Absoluteness of Christianity", pp. 22ff

<sup>82</sup>. Raimundo Panikkar, a theologian in the tradition of Hinduism, argues that 'Jesus is the Christ', but this sentence is not identical to 'the Christ is Jesus'. *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964), p. 24.



is the Lord. Today Christians may claim the uniqueness of Christian faith both from the historical Jesus and from practising the faith of Jesus. It is true that the figure of the historical Jesus has been seen in various ways. But there is a common element which unites each figure of Jesus; he served neighbours who were in need; he loved and accepted the 'sinners' as they were; he taught them to see themselves as the very sons and daughters of God; he cherished all life and existence as God's precious gift, etc. So Mackey could argue, "Such is the historical Jesus, who can be discovered at the end of any quest, old or new".<sup>83</sup> If there is such agreement amongst the questers, this can be the faith and the uniqueness of Jesus. Of course other religions may say that this 'faith' is not uniquely Christian, and that they also have it. Then Christians need not and cannot prohibit them from saying that. Other religions can argue the same faith and practice it. Then Christians can cooperate with them in enhancing the lives of human beings, as minjung theology shows by cooperating with other religions in participating in minjung movements. Today the uniqueness of Christian faith should be viewed not in its presuppositions but in its results; if Christian doctrine and its past history cannot prove its uniqueness, today the uniqueness of Christian faith can be tested and judged

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<sup>83</sup>. James P. Mackey, *Jesus the Man and the Myth*, p. 171.

as the believers in the Christian faith show how much they can 'uniquely' practice the faith of Jesus in future history: 'You will know them by their fruits' (Matt. 7.16a).

### 3. The Spirit of Jesus in History

Bultmann always begins his investigation with a historical analysis of the text. His form criticism tends to make it difficult to see the Synoptics as a biography of Jesus. He tries to understand the original meanings of the sayings of Jesus contained in the early tradition. But he is not unaware of the danger of asking what the Bible meant for a people who lived two thousand years ago and avoiding the crucial question of what it means for us today. Therefore his point of exegesis is to address questions in the reader's 'life' now. Bultmann believes that the gap between the text and the readers today can be overcome by a hermeneutic method--'pre-understanding' and 'life relationship'. In this manner Bultmann opens the way for a new quest for the historical Jesus. On the other hand a hermeneutical circle of liberation theology begins with the idea that there is reality--the life of the poor. Then the Bible is re-read to enhance this life by liberating praxis. There is a continuity between the theology of Bultmann and liberation theology in that *life* is a central point of their exegesis of the Bible, whatever their differences as to how this life is to be analyzed.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>. Cf. C.Rowland and M.Corner, *Op.cit.*, p. 70.

Bultmann demonstrates that both the eschatological and ethical sayings of Jesus compel man to decision. He sees that the unity of eschatological and ethical sayings can be sought in their final decisive sense; both the message of the coming of the reign of God and the will of God point men to the present moment as the final hour in the sense of "the hour of decision". Boff and Sobrino acknowledge that discipleship and solidarity with the poor can be achieved through an act of decision by each individual. There is also a continuity between Bultmann and the liberation theologians in that both believe that a new life can be experienced by an act of commitment. So Bultmann could say, "the responsibility is put on man; he must answer for his own actions".<sup>85</sup> But liberation theologians attribute more positive value to the socio-political dimension of the decision. They prove that socio-political activities can be a mediation of God. We could argue that the theology of Bultmann and liberation theology are not two different theologies in opposition to each other. "The move from existentialist theology to political theology is itself a consequence of the Bultmannian position".<sup>86</sup>

As a 'doing' theology, liberation theology does not successfully give an active role to the materially poor.

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<sup>85</sup>. R.Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, p. 95.

<sup>86</sup>. Dorothee Soelle, *Op. cit.*, p. 2.

Minjung theology puts the people in the centre of its theology, i.e. Jesus is minjung and vice versa. Minjung theology rejects power messianism which attempts to place a heroic leader in the centre of the liberating process. Salvation can be experienced by the people who participate in the messianic movement. However, Minjung theology does not deny that a messianic movement of the people can be based on a personal conversion of each individual.

All the theologians dealt with in this dissertation agree that sin consists of closing in on oneself to a point where one excludes God. Sin is the quest for self-contrived security and thus refuses God's future which comes to us. They also agree that salvation is experienced in this world, when we cherish all life and existence as God's precious gift. Though their emphasis and terminology are different (e.g. 'self-denial', 'decision', 'discipleship', 'critical transcendence', and so on), all these arguments point to one thing; that we can encounter God in an act of commitment to love our neighbours, as Jesus did. This was the faith of Jesus.

Fuchs and Ebeling show that the Christian kerygma is based on the faith of Jesus. Today we can meet Jesus in the particular texts which contain the decision and faith of Jesus. Käsemann demonstrates that Paul interprets the Spirit by his preaching the cross of Jesus, and that the criterion of authentic tradition in John is the voice of Jesus. Mackey connects the faith of Jesus to the Spirit.

The faith of Jesus by his life inspired similar faith in those with whom he came into contact, so that they could in turn inspire others. Now the life-giving spirit of Jesus is in history. He is the Lord of history. Whoever has the same spirit will confess that Jesus is his Lord. This spirit can be experienced both in the Christian message and our historical experience. Jesus speaks of God as Father and encourages his disciples to address God as Father and to share the relationship of sonship with the Father, 'For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God' (Rom. 8:14-16).

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